

HONG KONG

Art Souls of India

Rathak • Kuchipudi • Mohiniyattam

Compiled by
Dr. CHITRA SIVAKUMAR

Children Cultural Group • Hong Kong





Harshitha Mukunthan

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Message from Consul General

प्रधान कांसल
CONSUL GENERAL
भौतिक संस्कृति विभाग



भौतिक विभाग
कांसल भौतिक
CONSULATE GENERAL OF INDIA
HONG KONG

7th September 2021



MESSAGE

I am delighted to learn that Dr. Chitra Sivakumar, President, Children Cultural Group (CCG), Hong Kong is bringing out the publication titled 'Hong Kong Art Souls of India - Kathak, Kuchipudi, Mohinyattam' to record the contributions of academic institutions, organisations, associations and teachers of these Indian classical dance forms in Hong Kong.

I take this opportunity to convey my congratulations to Dr. Chitra Sivakumar and members of CCG, HK for their efforts to promote Indian culture in Hong Kong, and give them my best wishes for all their future endeavours in this regard.



Priyanka Chauhan

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Foreword

Jfind immense pleasure in writing a foreword for this book as I have personally witnessed the extent of Indian culture in Hong Kong. Since the first time I came in 2007 to the most recent time being 2019, I have seen the way Indian Classical Dance has gradually grown and it makes me happy to see a book that encapsulates that.

This well written and informative book by Smt. Chitra Sivakumar not only outlines the details of Kathak, Kuchipudi and Mohiniattam, but also highlights the ways in which it has blossomed in Hong Kong. After reading this I feel extremely pleased that our Indian Classical Dance styles have inspired so many people halfway across the world. I am touched by the dedication and commitment of you people.

In addition to the dance itself, it's the history and culture that plays a prominent role in understanding and fully comprehending these traditional dances. I believe this book can inspire the younger generation to delve into our beautiful dance forms and help keep the arts alive.

Padma Shri SUNAYANA HAZARILAL

*Sunayana Hazarilal & Natawari School of Kathak,
Mumbai, Maharashtra, India*



Preface

Jn the Indian Classical Performing Arts scene, each classical dance form shares some core principles that are represented through costumes, movement styles, facial expressions, footwork and hand gestures. The beautiful storylines usually feature the life events and occurrences of the Hindu Gods in mythology.

The major Indian classical dance forms recognised by Sangeeta Natak Academy and the Ministry of Culture are: Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kathakali and Kuchipudi. Recent additions to the list are: Manipuri, Mohiniyattam, Odissi, Sattriya and Chhau.

One of the definitions of history is the study of past events, particularly in human affairs. If the events are registered somewhere, the future generation will know where they are now and how the system has evolved to that point.

Keeping this in mind, we wanted to register all activities done in the field of performing arts, the Indian Classical Dances in Hong Kong. Though a land far away from India, those Indians who came to visit or live here, livened up their life by following the tradition and teaching the same to the current generation. The first volume of this book gave details about Bharathanatyam dancers and shows of Hong Kong. This book is the second volume of the book which will register about the dance forms of Kathak, Kuchipudi and Mohiniyattam.

Starting from 1993, since the inception of Vrindaban Academy which was instrumental in bringing a Bharathanatyam and Kuchipudi teacher to Hong Kong to teach the dance, there was a continuous stream of Indian art souls in Hong Kong teaching this art. Though we don't know much about it before 1993, we planned this book to record the organisations which promoted this art and teachers who were keen in promoting. This art in this land in various ways from that period. Regular perfor-

mances in various universities, government organized functions, Indian associations have kept this art alive in Hong Kong.

There were many organisations who brought experienced well-known dancers from India then and there to give the true taste of the art to both the Chinese and Indian community here. The first part of the book gives details about the organisations who organized such dance shows especially Kathak, Kuchipudi and Mohiniyattam.

Teachers are most instrumental in promoting this art. So the second part is dedicated to teachers.

Younger generation put so much effort in learning the art and preparing themselves to become the ambassadors of the art in and around Hong Kong. Pictures of all those budding stars who graduated by doing a solo dance recital before huge audiences is presented.

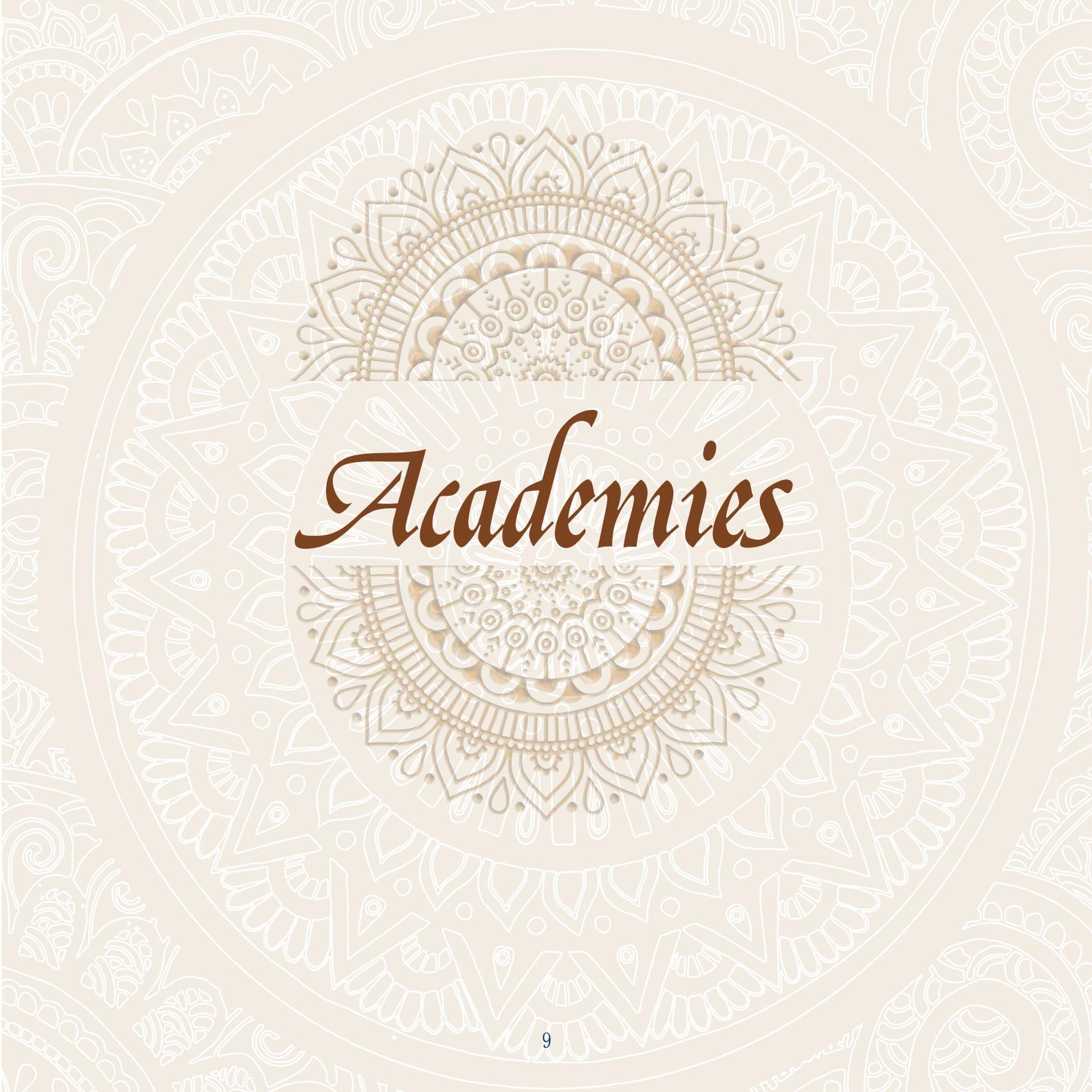
I thank all the gurus of the dances who gave the details of the dance form and photos of themselves and their students. I dedicate this book to all the art lovers all over the world.

I acknowledge all the friends who helped me in providing the photos and details.

Dr. CHITRA SIVAKUMAR

Author • 2021





Academies

Vrindaban Academy of Indian Classical Music and Dance Limited



Vrindaban Academy was founded by Padma Bhushan Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia in Hong Kong on March 2, 1993. Dr. Siri Rama was the first teacher invited to Hong Kong and Panditji brought her to perform at the Academy of Performing arts HK and for other occasions.

Academy succeeded in attracting more and more non-Indians to its newly-established school in Heng Fa Chuen, offering classes in sitar, tabla, Indian flute, vocals as well as the classical dances Bharathanatyam and Kuchipudi.

In collaboration with the Chinese University and the Hong Kong Academy of Performing arts, the Academy has also given lectures and run workshops on the classical performing arts.

Major productions like Sacred Dances and Music of India by Anandi and Classical Women of India, Eye on India Festival presented the Indian art to Hong Kong residents.

Renowned exponents from India like Meenakshi Seshadri's dance performance, Dr. M. Balamurali Krishna's vocals, Aboli Sulakhe's Sarod performance performed for this academy in Hong Kong.

The company existed up to November 2009.

<http://www.scmp.com/article/47303/anniversary-extravaganza-queens-dance>

<http://www.scmp.com/article/109560/rare-sight-indias-delights>

Sri Shakti Academy

St was founded in 2003 by three internationally acclaimed Indian classical dancers specializing in different Indian Classical Dance forms -Ms Neesha Jhaveri (Kathak), Ms Ranjini Menon (Bharathanatyam) and Mrs. Priyadarshini Ghosh (Mohiniyattam).

The Academy was set up with the aim to educate the audience in the art of appreciation of Indian Classical Dance and Music and in pursuit of achieving these goals, the academy has been imparting classes to many students, organising lecture demonstrations and workshops at universities, providing performance opportunities to aspiring dancers, and presenting large scale original productions to the Hong Kong audience. The students of the academy get an opportunity to perform at its annual show named ANJALI. Some of Sri Shakti's original productions include "Panchabhoota - Dance of the Five Elements" (Feb 2004), "Vaama - the Feminine" (Sep 2006), "Tao of the Heart" (May 2007), "Krsna" (April 2010) and most recently "A Journey Within" (2018) - a collaborative production of 3 dance schools of Hong Kong.

With two of the founder members returning to India, Sri Shakti Academy is now being run solely under the guidance of Ms. Neesha Jhaveri and has been more focused in the North Indian classical art form of Kathak.

The academy currently has more than 50 students across all age groups and continues to grow in size and outreach each year. Students of the academy have actively participated in multiple cultural events in Hong Kong over the years, such as the "Asia Ethnic Cultural Performances" organised by the LCSD (Leisure and Cultural Services Department) of Hong Kong, "Republic Day celebrations" at the Indian Consulate, "India by the Bay Festival" at the Asia Society, events by RTHK, Beyond Bollywood and HKTDC to quote a few.

Sri Shakti Academy has also invited Padmashree Guru Sunayana Hazarilalji (Neeshajji's Guru) all the way from India, accompanied by great musical artists like Pt. Somnath Mishra (vocal), Pt. Kalinath Mishra (tabla) and Alka Gujar Ji to conduct workshops and dance exams at various occasions. The academy was blessed to witness and be part of Guru Padmashree Sunayanaji's performance at Lingnan University in 2017.

Over the past few years, Sri Shakti Academy has also gone international - with performances at various prestigious venues such as the Chiang Kai Shek Memorial Hall in Taiwan, Nehru Centre - Mumbai (India) and the Kala Ghoda Festival Mumbai.

<https://www.srishaktiacademy.org/>

Sri Shakti Academy In Media

Hari Om Dance Society (HODS)

Hari Om Dance Society was formed in 2008 by Master Hari Om (Srihari Baladitya Eranki) and his students primarily consisting of Hong Kong Chinese with an aim to promote the beauty of Indian dance in Hong Kong and South East Asia!

Master Hari Om and his students under the aegis of HODS have performed Kuchipudi, Bollywood, folk and semi classical Indian dance in Hong Kong, Macau, USA, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, China, India and England.

HODS has participated in several prestigious events in Hong Kong and internationally, including the International Kuchipudi Convention in Hyderabad, India in 2014 and 2016, and was the only non Indian team to get the honor of performing there in 2014.

HODS also organizes workshops by eminent artists from India and also organizes regular dance shows for its students to showcase the beauty of Indian dance since 2008.

HODS has also contributed to the society by way of raising funds in support of organizations such as ORBIS Hong Kong, Children's Cancer Foundation Hong Kong and YAMA Foundation, Hong Kong.

Hari Om Dance Society In Media

Chinese nationals enthral audience

DC CORRESPONDENT
GUANGZHOU, CHINA

Audiences were enthralled by Kuchipudi performances in Shenzhen. Subsequently, a Kuchipudi dance recital was organized by Shenzhen Art and Culture Association at Shenzhen University. The event was organized by the Chinese Association of Kuchipudi, which is headed by Dr. H. R. Rao, who is the founder of Kuchipudi, along with his wife, Dr. Sudha Rao, who taught Kuchipudi in Hong Kong. The three productions of the evening by Aruna Rao, of India, and Dr. Sudha Rao, along with Venkatesh Chaitanya, left the audience spellbound, as they were the first Kuchipudi performances in Shenzhen.



Actresses from Hong Kong perform Kuchipudi Dance during a programme at Auditorium Auditorium in Shenzhen.

They are disciples of Kuchipudi guru, Shrikrishna Balasubramanyam, who teaches Kuchipudi in Hong Kong.

Then it is a pure dance performance by the girls in their Sarees. Enriched by the perfect music, the other performances were enthralling. Great dance, including one by a Kuchipudi dancer, Sudha Rao, Shringa Raja, who took up Kuchipudi after her retirement. The 2010 Shenzhen International Cultural Festival was held from 18 to 22 August. And that is where it brought in popularity. On the 21st, Sudha Rao, Aruna Rao, Venkatesh Chaitanya, and Dr. Sudha Rao, with 100 students gave a grand finale.

Perfect poise



Actress of Kuchipudi, Sudha Rao, and her students, in their Kuchipudi traditional dress, during a Kuchipudi dance at the Shenzhen Auditorium Auditorium in Shenzhen, China. Among the students is Sudha Rao, who is the founder of Kuchipudi, and Dr. Sudha Rao, who is the first Kuchipudi dancer to perform in Shenzhen.

పురివిష్ణున వైనా కుచిపుడి ప్రారంభించినది



ప్రారంభించిన వృత్యుత్సవం



Surtaal Academy

Surtaal Academy of Performing Arts was started in 2016 backed with years of experience in teaching and performing both within and outside India through the Guru Smt. Shweta Rajput. Academy has organized workshops such as Kathak workshop by Vidushi Saswati Sen and Vocal workshop by Mullah Afsar Khan in Hong Kong. It has grown in these five years by training more than 60 students. Yearly anniversary programmes encourage the students to perform there by displaying the competence of young talents.

Feel the Beat

Founded by Uday Sathala in 2011, a talented and renowned Indian dance instructor and choreographer in Hong Kong. It specializes in Bollywood/Tollywood, Pop/Jazz, Hip Hop, Indian Classical & Semi-Classical, Folk Dance, Kathak, Bhangra and Belly Dance. It is a dance academy for dance lovers to explore international dance styles through the traditional and modern Indian culture of dance. These dance styles are also perfect for beginners to start with as a dance workout.

Mudra Dance Academy

Incorporated in Hong Kong in 2016, Mudra Dance Academy is the only dance academy in Hong Kong that specialises in the classical dance form of Mohiniyattam. In addition to imparting training in Mohiniyattam, the Academy offers sessions on other classical contemporary dance forms. Mudra also conducts workshops and lectures on Mohiniyattam for educational institutions and organisations.



Organisations & Associations

Consul General of India in Hong Kong and Macau (CGI) encourages the local classical dance performers by inviting them to perform during Independence Day and Republic Day events and recommend various dance groups to perform in events organized by the Government of Hong Kong such as Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances, Book Fair. Workshops are conducted at the consulate when eminent dancers in this area visit Hong Kong.

Indian Arts Circle (IAC) is a non profit making organisation. The Arts Circle was established in October 1978 and formally registered in May 1979. Its aims and objectives are to organise Indian cultural events for the members and the general public, inculcate interest in drama, music, dance, literature and visual arts among the members, and to co-operate with similar organisations. The group organises a couple of events every year to provide opportunities to local talent, and also invites renowned artistes from India.

Over the years, the Indian Arts Circle has set a platform for Kuchipudi and Kathak dancers in events they organised. While promoting the local talent, they have also invited renowned singers, musicians and dancers from India to perform in Hong Kong.

With the Consul General of India, and Dr. Hari N. Harilela as Honorary Patrons, and Mr. G.T. Gul as Permanent Adviser of the Circle, they encourage the Bharathanatyam art too.

Tamil Cultural Association (TCA) is a non profit making organisation. TCA was established in 1967. Every year programmes are organised to showcase the Tamil culture and traditions. Indian classical dances like Kathak, Kuchipudi and Mohiniyattam were performed in many TCA programmes.

The Hong Kong Telugu Samakhya (THKTS) is a non-profit organisation representing Indian States of Andhra Pradesh & Telangana community in and around Hong Kong. It is a cultural and social organisation. The purpose of this organisation is to propagate Telugu Culture,

Telugu language and Art forms among Telugu people and among other diasporas. They invite local Kuchipudi artistes to perform during Ugadi (Telugu New Year) Sankranti (Harvest Festival) and Dassera functions and in other events organized all over Hong Kong.

Malayali Association for Art & Culture is a non-profit organisation aiming to promote the rich Malayali culture, and to make it available through exchanges in the form of art, music and literary events among the Malayali community here and to the rest of Hong Kong. The Association, while organising cultural events to encourage talents within the community in Hong Kong, invites local Mohiniyattam dancers to perform.

Kannada Association Hong Kong (KSHK) is a non profit making organisation. KSHK was established in 2005. Display of traditions and culture are the foremost objective of the organisation. They invite local classical dance performers such as Kuchipudi to perform during their Ugadi and Rajyotsava functions and in other events organized all over Hong Kong.

Children Cultural Group established in the year 2000 and registered in 2008 was founded to encourage Indian children to learn the culture and its values. Dance classes were organized. Students learning Indian classical dances such as Kathak, Kuchipudi and Mohiniyattam were encouraged to perform in the events organized by this group.

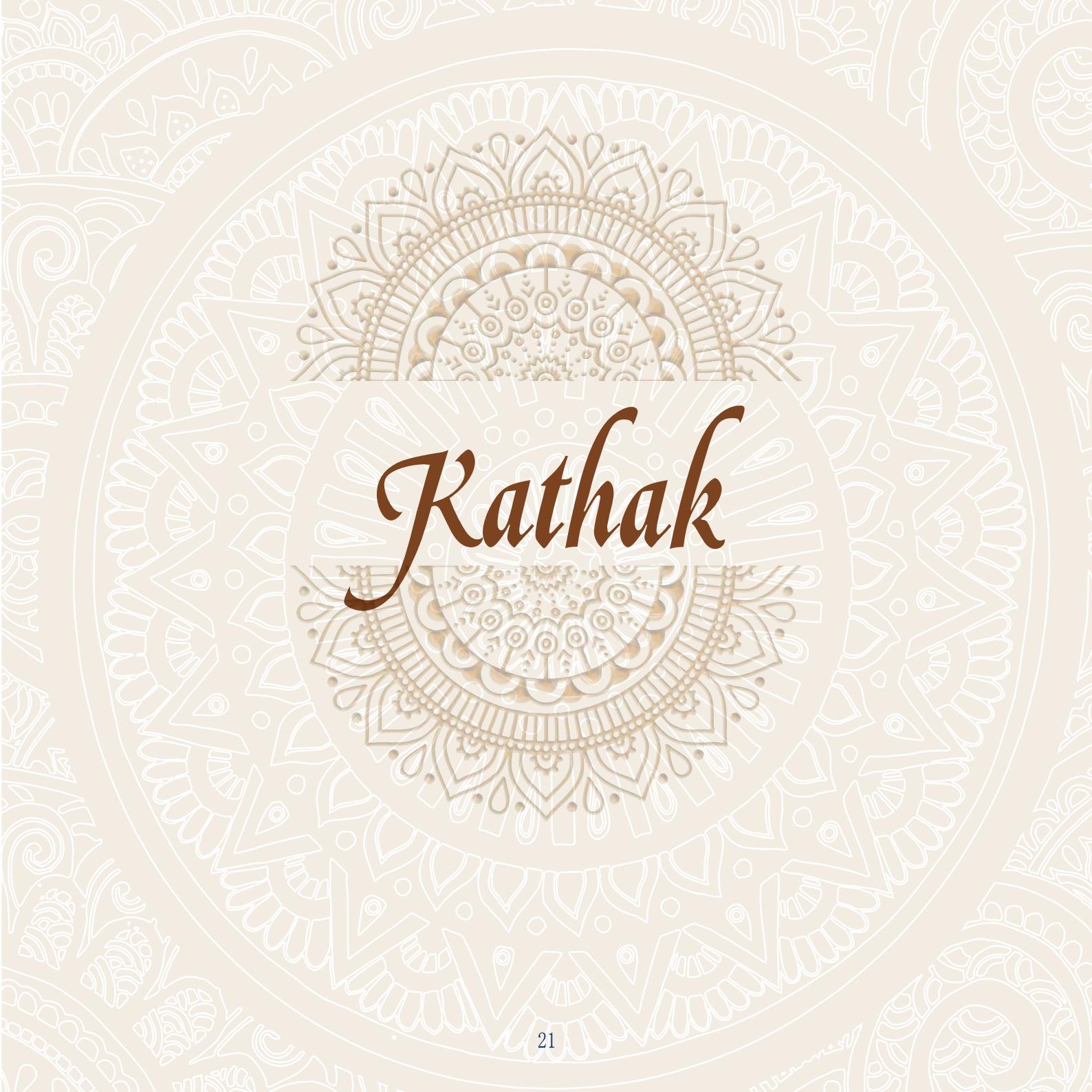
Beyond Bollywood established in 2015 is a charity with the aim to use Indian dance such as Bharathanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi as a medium together with Indian cinema, music and theatre to create a collective force among dance practitioners and establish collaborative partnerships with diverse range of NGOs, Universities, Corporates, Social Enterprises to mobilize and empower the underserved population through various community-based dance projects in order to advance the concept of cultural diversity, equality, respect and community inclusion.

This organization aims to build a platform to bridge different dancers to get connected and provide a network of dance change makers to engage and collaborate with each other so as to inspire them to expand their local and international awareness on creating positive impacts within individuals, communities and the world through their respective influence and talent in dance.

Kathak.Kuchipudi.Mohiniyattam dance forms and Hong Kong Residents

With academies started for various dance forms in Hong Kong there was a massive interest in Indian classical dance with some noted local students performing in many events. None of the international events are without one of the Indian classical art form. Hong Kong Chinese residents were also keen in learning this art forms.

Moreover, currently students belonging to different nations learn these art forms from the professional classical dance teachers.



Kathak

K

athak is one of the eight forms of Indian **classical dances** from India. This prominent form of Indian dance originates from the nomadic bards of ancient northern India.

Why is it called Kathak?

The word Kathak comes from the original Sanskrit word “Kathakar” which means a storyteller. “Katha kahe so kathak kahave“, which means “one who tells a story is a storyteller”. This dance form usually tells stories to the onlookers. Kathak started as a dance for upper caste Brahman men belonging to the caste called ‘Brahman Kathak’ which is also where the dance gets its name from.

How did Kathak dance art come into existence?

The tradition of this dance form is traced back to the 400 BCE. The stupa in Bharhut, a village in the Satna district of Madhya Pradesh, India stands as a representative of early Kathak art with ‘The dance of Apsaras’ sculpture. The 2nd century BC panels found there illustrate sculptures of dancers in different vertical poses with arm positions that resemble Kathak steps, many of which reflect the ‘pataka hasta’ Mudra.

Text-based analysis indicates Kathak as an ancient Indian classical dance form that presumably originated in Banaras or Varanasi and then spread its wings in Jaipur, Lucknow and many other regions of north and northwest India.

Kathak is a dance that recites the epics and mythological stories with added elements of abhinay i.e. expressional demonstration. Kathakars traveled around the country entertaining and educating the people with sacred legends, folktales and mythology. While reciting they sang, danced and acted. By the 13th century this style had developed its own special features. In the 15th or the 16th centuries, during the Bhakti (devotional) movement, Kathak was greatly influenced by the Lord Krishna cult. By the end of Mughal rule

Kathak dancers evolved. Vaishnav philosophy and tales of Radha Krishna became powerful entertainment in the Mughal courts.

Later, Kathak developed into a few traditions or 'gharanas' in the courts of Jaipur and Lucknow; it grew into a major art form with the support of Nawab Wajid Ali Khan, Ishwari Prasad of the Lucknow Gharana, Bhanuji of the Jaipur Gharana, Janaki Prasad of the Benaras Gharana, and Raja Chakradhar Singh of the Raigarh Gharana came into existence.

What do the dancers wear for this dance?

Kathak is a wonderful blend of Hindu and Muslim culture. This led to two types of gorgeous costumes different for male and female dancers



Angrakha, the body costume of Hindu style consists of Lahenga-Choli-Urhni for female and Kurta-Duppatah for male. Muslim style consists of Churidar-Kameez-Vest for female and Pajama-Dupatta-Topi for male.

Dupatta is a long piece of fabric about 2.5 to 3 meters long which is wrapped elegantly around the upper half of a dancer's body. Pagri is a cap worn on the head. Pajama or Kammeez is pants almost like a pipe at the bottom near legs and spacious near thigh and waist. Lehanga or Ghagra is a long ankle length embroidered skirt with a lot of volume which goes off the floor as the dancer moves fast and turns. A choli is a short blouse. In this art form, the dancer should be tied from the waist. Urhni is a transparent scarf worn to cover the head compliments and the costume of female dancers. For male, the upper part of the body is usually left bare or may be covered by a loose jacket.

Costume is well complemented with traditional jewellery, usually gold, worn on the head, hair, nose, ear, neck, waist and hand. Jewellery of male dancers is quite simple compared to their female counterparts and are usually made of stone.

Musical anklets called ghunghru made of leather straps with small metallic bells attached to it are wrapped in ankles that produce rhythmic sound while the dancer performs excellent and spectacular footwork.

Vivid face make-up helps to highlight the dancer's facial expressions.

Where does the music come from?

H

industani music is the soul of the dance.

Manjira, a hand cymbal played mostly by guru to provide rhythmic vocals and Tabla, a double barrel instrument is used to harmonise well with the rhythmic foot movements of the dancer. Other accompanying instruments in Kathak dance are Sarangi or Harmonium to meter the tal (cycle) and pakhawaj, Sitar, Sarod and Flute used to add effect, depth and structure to the expressive stage of a Kathak performance.

The songs are mostly in languages like Sanskrit, Hindi or Urdu.



Tabla



Manjira Cymbal)



Harmonium



Sitar

How do the dancers use the movements?

In Kathak, each syllable is used not only to represent the sounds of feet and bells, but also to harmonize with the strokes of accompanying percussion instruments.

Kathak students will start with the **basic technique** of Kathak such as- Lay, Teental (16 beats), Namaskar, Tatkaar (footwork), Hand movement, Chaal(stylized way of walking), Chakra (spin) and proceeds to **Abhinay** (acting) through Gat Nikas and Gat Bhav, and **Bols** (composition) like Toda, Tukda, Amad, Salami and Paran. As students learn more complicated repertoire, they will be expected to perform in different Tals.

The types of circles that are made during dance are static, dynamic and sitting circles. Hand gestures consist of Asanjukta Hasta Mudra (Single Handed Gestures), Sanjukta Hasta Mudra (Combined Handed Gestures). There are variations in eye, neck and feet movements. During performance, pieces of abstract dance may be recited before actual performance. This recitation or padant is a mode of communication with the percussionist (s) who has to match and strike the syllable the dancer recites. Furthermore, the padant enables the audience to visualize and appreciate the rhythmic patterns before they are revealed in dance.

The pure dance is called a **nritta**, while the expressive dance is called a **nritya**.

Kathak dance performance can be divided into two parts.

Nrittang (Pure dance portion) consisting of That, Amad, Toda, Tukda etc.

Abhinay or nritya (Expression) consisting of Gat Nikas, Gat Bhav, Thumri, Bhajan.

Also, they will increase focus on expression and Abhinay (acting) through Vandana, Bhajan, Thumri, Tarana, Gat Bhav, Kabit etc.

The traditional Kathak solo is not typically thought of as a list of items, but rather a progression through sub-genres toward a climax bringing the dancer, musicians, and audience on a journey as one toward a transformative experience. The sub genres, such as Vandana, Thaat, Bol paran, Gat Bhav, Tarana, Thumri are often not choreographed and are performed depending on the inspiration of the dancer. The element of Upaj, loosely interpreted as improvisation, is very prominent in a Kathak solo.

Usually Kathak is performed for about 90 minutes long and is done in specific order.

Invocation A traditional Kathak solo begins with an invocation or a vandana where the dancer generally pays tribute to God through Guru Vandana. This includes a pranam (salutation) and a sloka (verse) invoking a specific deity such as Lord Ganesh, the elephant tusked lord or Shiva Shakti, embodying both the lasya and tandava aspects of Kathak dance. Various rituals of worship, such as offering garlands of flowers, lighting the lamp, and the ringing of bells are usually depicted.

Aamad Similar to invocation. Aamad means entrance followed by Salami (saluting the audience). The term literally means ‘to arrive’. It is performed with Natvari Bol which is the first linguistic/vocal component of the performance. In the composition, the grace and charm of the dancer’s kinaesthetic exploits are elevated. This is the Mughal salutation to the audience.

Nritta Taal Nritta means pure Dance. Nritta is dependent on two basic ingredients, Taal and Laaya. The Taal denotes a time cycle and the Laaya denotes the speed. It offers scintillating patterns of sound imagery, which is produced by dexterously manipulating the pace of footwork and the cadence of the ankle bells.

Abhinay It is presented as Hori or Gat Nikas or Gat Bhav in which ‘abhinay’ or ‘theatrical performance’ can be seen most clearly. The bhav aspect became the emotional language of Kathak. It is very effective with the close proximity of the dancer to the audience, due to which the gestures and expressions are clearly seen and interpreted by the audience. It is only through the movement of the hands, the eyes, the eyebrows etc. that the dancer presents the entire gamut of feelings and emotions. Gat Nikas and Bhav for Abhinay (acting), commonly called Gat Vab, is a term derived from gait or stride.

The dancer uses highly stylised and dramatic Gat to portray mundane everyday activities that are being described through the narrative. It is a composition describing the movement of a bird (e.g. peacock, swan), animal (e.g. elephant, lion), a human character or Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Different types of Gats are Parvati Gat (movement of Hindu Goddess Parvati - Goddess of strength),

In this item, the dancer presents stories of Krishna and Radha such as romantic rendezvous between Radha-Krishna or the childhood tale of Lord Krishna in which he steals butter (makhanchor).

Kavit performance commences after salaami. It is a lyric or poetic composition, with the body movements and gestures decoding its meaning or implication.

Tarana It is a fast and rhythmic recitation of words or phrases to complex footwork. It is a rhythmic dance in which the beauty of rhythm is explained through various movements, various combinations of rhythmic phrases, and stances.

Thumri means to walk with dancing steps so as to make the ankle-bells tinkle. In this item, the choreography allows the dancer to improvise according to the bhav (or the mood). It consists of dance, dramatic gestures, mild eroticism, evocative love poetry and folk songs.

Tirwat similar to a tarana (which is primarily a nritta aspect of the dance) in which tarana bols are used, but it also includes some nritya aspect in the form of a kavita and song. Radha and Krishna themes, symbolizing the devotee and the devoted, and the soul's quest for divine union are performed. It is a semi-classical genre of Indian classical music that imbibes the essence of percussion rhythms, poetry and melody to present the Raga and Taal. It is a bandish or composition which is sung in a fast tempo and consists of Bols of tabla or pakhawaj, sargams and meaningless words like in Tarana.

Thaat consists of stylised poses with movements of limbs by the dancer. This is a composition of the performance after Aamad in which the dancer performs short-lived but elegant and alluring acts like mukhra, tukra, tihai and chalan in conjunction with recitation of taal (rhythm) in vilambit laya (tempo). It is usually performed, where the dancer tunes herself with the musicians, settling in with an improvised exchange of rhythmic flurries and crisp karans leading into bol paran

Beginning in bilumbith laya, the dancers accentuate the sum with crisp karanths (poses or stances) and quick rhythmic flourishes. In madhya laya (medium tempo) and finally drut laya (fast tempo), the dancers will recite compositions from their respective gharanas and end in a sawal jawab, a question and answer. This progression in the dance is akin to a dialogue between dancers and musicians and the audience as well. The composition concludes in a stand-still posture.

Tukda is the most basic, yet the most important dance piece in the Kathak dance form and is a small piece of an avartan made of dance Bol or tabla Bol. It is a single rotation of any taal (rhythm) or Bol (rhythm) of lesser matra. This is the first time we see the coming together of mudras, footwork, facial expressions and bodily movements.

Chalan means movement with a pattern using the foot. It is a sequence of syllables that are suited to the rhythm of the taal and ends with a Tihai.

Toda is a group of the basic Kathak syllables that usually start on sam (the first beat) and after two or more cycles end on Sam. At intervening phases, various todas like toda of adilaya, powerful and mellowed toda, etc. are interjected into the composition, which the dancer herself or himself has to recite. This feature is also presented as a short question-answer type of interaction between the dancer and the tabla player.

Paran It is generally considered a progression of the dance consisting of composition using bols from the pakhawaj instead of only dance or tabla bols. During the enactment of paran, various bols from Pakhawaj like dhumkit, gadigan, dhagethit, etc. are added to the composition.

Parmelu is a composition that is a combination of sounds from nature and the bols of the Pakhawaj such as *kukuthere* (birds), *jhijhikita* (sound of ghungroo), *tigdadigdig* (strut of peacock) etc.

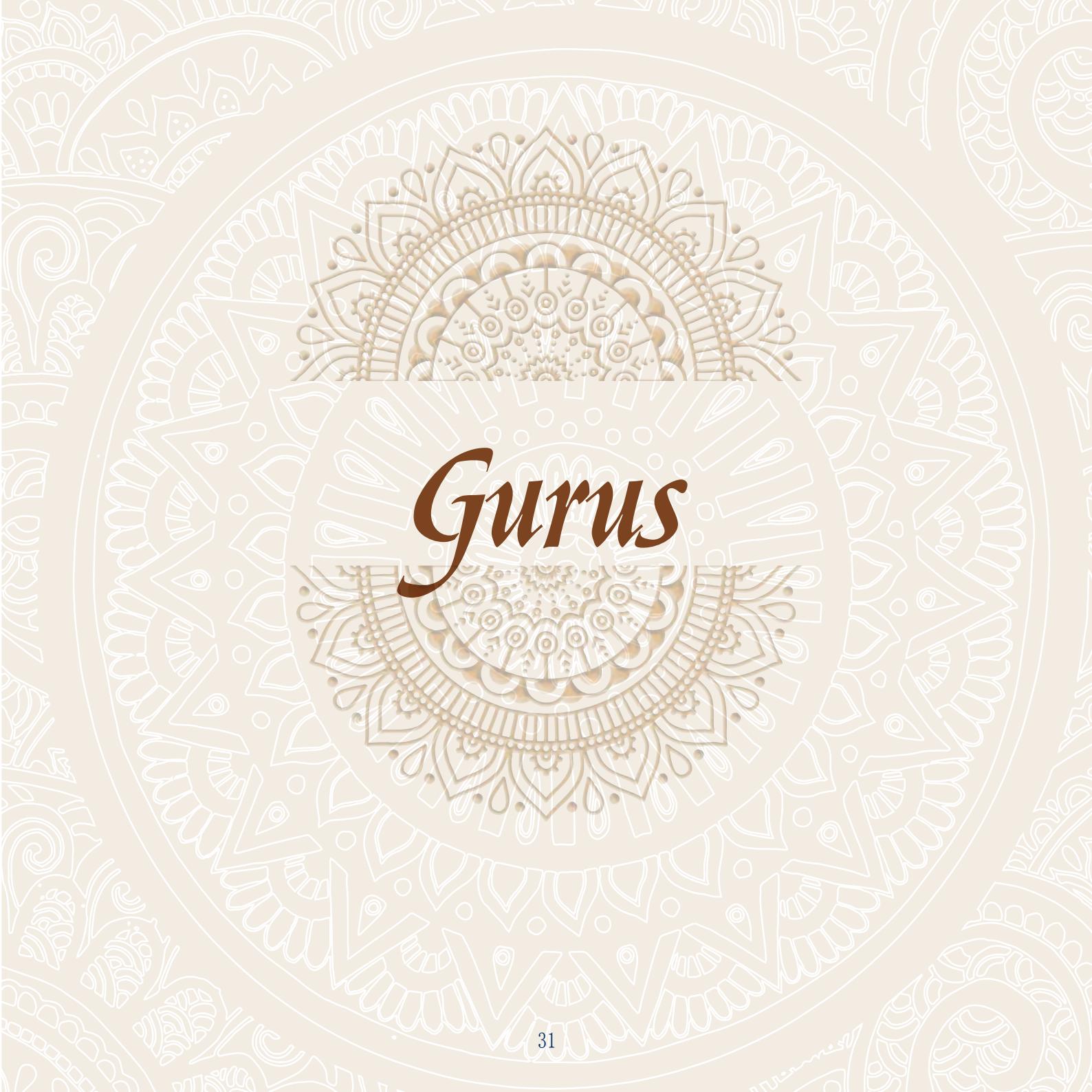
Tatkaar is a critical part of Kathak dance in which the performer uses a synchronised feet-and-hand kinaesthetic vocabulary and even sings, while performing the sang bol. The movements of feet along with the rhythm (taal) and tempo (lay) is known as Tatkaar. No performance can be complete without Tatkaar, which is one of the most challenging aspects of Kathak. It consists of the movements of legs along with rhythm and tempo. It can be performed at various 'lays' or speeds.

Ladi is a predominantly footwork composition in which often, a single theme is interpreted varyingly by choreographers and presented differently, but inevitably, the composition ends in a tihai.

Tihai is a concluding composition, again encompasses crafty footwork performed repeatedly on vilambit (long and lingering) set of bols. It is a fast-paced and relatively lengthy part of tatkaar. It is a footwork composition consisting of a long set of bols repeated thrice so that the very last bol ends dramatically on 'sam'. Chakradhar Tihai means repetition of the dance piece three times and is performed as the final piece of tatkaar, in dhrutlay (the fastest speed).

What are the Courses offered for this art form?

Recitals are held at the end of each semester. Annual certification exams are held and students have the opportunity to reach different levels of learning Kathak. There are two year certificate course, three year diploma course, one year post-diploma course (after diploma course) and professional course (one year after post-diploma course) as well. Colleges and universities are offering these courses.



Gurus



Neesha Jhaveri Kathak

A

teacher, performer and choreographer, Ms. Neesha Jhaveri is a disciple of late Guru Pt. Hazarilalji and Padmashree Smt. Sunayana Hazarilal, both doyens of Jankiprasad school of Banaras Gharana, Kathak.



A recipient of the National Scholarship in 1995 from the Government of India, she has performed at various national dance festivals in India and abroad. After moving to Hong Kong in 2001, she continued with her passion and became one of the founder members of Sri Shakti Academy in 2003 actively participating in its series of original productions. She gave various lecture demonstrations and performances at various universities in HK, including the Lingnan University, Baptist University and Chinese University of Hong Kong to spread the awareness of Indian Classical Dance and Culture.

She has also given solo and group performances along with her students in Shanghai (2013), Macao (2014), Taiwan (2017, 2018) and Mumbai (since 1980).

Furthermore, she has till now guided three students to becoming young performers by completing their Rang Pravesh. She also conducts weekly classes in order to train a number of students and has learned to adapt during the lockdown by doing so virtually. She wishes to continue spreading this beautiful art form while hoping to preserve its legacy.







Shweta Rajput Kathak

Ms. Shweta Rajput comes with a solid performing as well as certified and accredited teaching background in Classical Hindustani Music and Kathak, as well as in lyrical theatre, drama, folk dance and music.



She has trained in Jaipur and Lucknow gharana from Guru Ashwini Kumar and Ritesh Sharma senior disciples of Girdhari Maharaj Ji and Pandit Birju Maharaj respectively.

She has more than 25 years of experience as a performer and 12 years in conducting and organizing various shows related to performing arts. She had organised cultural programmes in Jaipur and in international locations like Frankfurt, London and presently in Hong Kong. She had performed **Pandwani** with the renowned artist Sushri TEEJAN BAI in 2003 at Varanasi. In Hong Kong, she performed solo in Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances programme in HONG KONG in 2016 and vocal recitation in PUMKHA programme in 2017.

She was honored by “Chattisgarh Ratna” in her state Chattisgarh for her consistent work in performing arts.







Binita Haria Kathak

Binita Haria is an Indian Dance instructor with weekly drop-in classes at the largest dance studio in Central Hong Kong, and also has trained multiple Indian dance performance groups in Hong Kong. She has over thirty years experience in Kathak, having started her training and performances with Guru Alpana Sengupta under Raigarh gharana in London from the tender age of four years old. She complemented her training more recently with Guru Sushma Mehta in London and Guru Neesha Jhaveri under Benares gharana in Hong Kong.



Originally from London, Binita has performed as both a soloist and in dance groups around the world including UK, France, Germany, USA, Morocco, Croatia, Slovenia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia and Japan. She achieved this whilst gaining a First in Mathematics from Oxford University and working as an investment banker up to Director level in London.

Once Binita moved to Hong Kong on 2016, she began teaching Bollywood Dance classes with classical Indian fusion throughout the week for adults from beginners to advanced level and choreographing group dances for many weddings. Binita has held multiple student performance courses, taking her students from beginner to stage, and also has a professional dance group for larger corporate events.

Binita's classes have been listed as one of the Best Dance Classes in Hong Kong by Sassy HK and her Performance Course recommended in SCMP Lifestyle.



GURUS





Siddhi Nikhil Naresh Kathak

Siddhi Nikhil Naresh is originally from India but has been living and teaching in Hong Kong to kids and adults since 2018. She completed her Masters in Kathak (Praveen) from Prayag Sangeet Samiti, Allahabad, India. I am from Lucknow Gharana. She has more than 14 years of experience in this Kathak dance field.

Siddhi – A Classical Beat was founded in 2018 with the aim to spread discipline, healthy mind and body and cultural learning in the form of Kathak.



I have worked and performed with Ms. Sharmishta Mukherjee, renowned classical dancer across India & abroad for 2 years. She had performed for the 10th Anniversary Award Ceremony of The World's Children's Prize for the rights of the child held in Sweden.

She offers a comprehensive dance curriculum to students of any age. As it says-Age is just a number.



GURUS



Swapnal Gadnis Kathak

Swapnal Gadnis is founder of Ashtadha Kathak Academy, Hong Kong. She started learning Kathak when she was 6 years old. After a brief discontinuation, Swapnal decided to reignite her passion when she moved to Hong Kong and sought out the tutelage of renowned Kathak Guru Smt. Neesha Jhaveri. Swapnal continues to learn as well as teach Kathak from Jankiprasad Kathak school of Benaras Gharana. She is also very fortunate to participate in workshops of Padmashree Sunayana Hazarilal. Swapnal has performed in many events in Hong Kong.



Apart from Kathak, Swapnal has also choreographed many bollywood songs at different events in Hong Kong. Swapnal has completed her Masters in Computer Management and is mother of two children.

GURUS



Zil Virani Kathak

Zil Virani, disciple of Smt. Shoma Kaikini Singh., She has been learning since 2009 at Nrityanidhi (Mumbai). A classical dancer, troupe member, Choreographer and Teacher at Nrityanidhi. She has teaching experience in Kathak for 5 years. She has performed at San Francisco (2013) , Hong Kong (2019), cities in India including Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Kochi, Chennai and many other countries with Nrityanidhi.



A skillful teacher and an alluring performer, has worked with various groups and events. She has conducted various workshops. She is based in Mumbai India. Her effort and aim as a Teacher is such that, every Shishya emerges as a soulful, holistic artist all set to spread the magnificence of art into the world!

GURUS



Janhavi Wekhande Kathak

Jy profession Janhavi is Electronics and Telecommunication engineer. Her passion is art, music, dance and cooking. She started learning Kathak at the age of 7 and classical music at the age of 12. She performed various types of dances since her childhood and performed in the annual cultural programme of one of the leading newspapers of Nagpur at the age of 11.



She started teaching Indians and non-Indians (localities) Kathak and Bollywood dance when her daughter was just 8 months old. This is a beautiful journey to teach members who are so keen to learn beyond borders. Since 2013, she has performed in many stage programmes in Hong Kong like Asian ethnic cultural performances show, Consulate General of India, Maharashtra Mandal Hong Kong and many non profit organisations including governmental projects.



MENKA Rachel Purwaney

Amin Kathak



As a child, whenever Menka saw a mirror or an empty space, Menka danced. Dance is visual music for Menka. She performed at competitions where she was awarded on numerous occasions and was made school dance captain. She directed school dance shows for fundraisers along with being part of the creative and choreography team. Formal dance training began when she started learning Flamenco in Spain at the age of 18. Tracing the roots of Flamenco she started Kathak at 21 in 2001 with Smt. Neesha Jhaveri in Hong Kong. She then performed her Rang Pravesh in 2007 and did her Visharad in 2019 under Smt. Neesha and Padmashree Smt. Sunayana Hazarilal's guidance. She has performed in various countries including Spain, Hong Kong, Taiwan and India. Prior to Kathak, she had learnt flamenco, tabla and classical singing. In 2019 she certified in both yoga and children's yoga. Currently she teaches Kathak, yoga and meditation to children.

Menka is teaching Kathak to young adults and conducting lecture demonstrations at schools. As a teacher, she would like to help students gain a holistic knowledge of Kathak whereby they understand the history, the music, the performing aspect and the intricacies and nuances of the Kathak.

GURUS



Sathala Uday Kumar Kathak

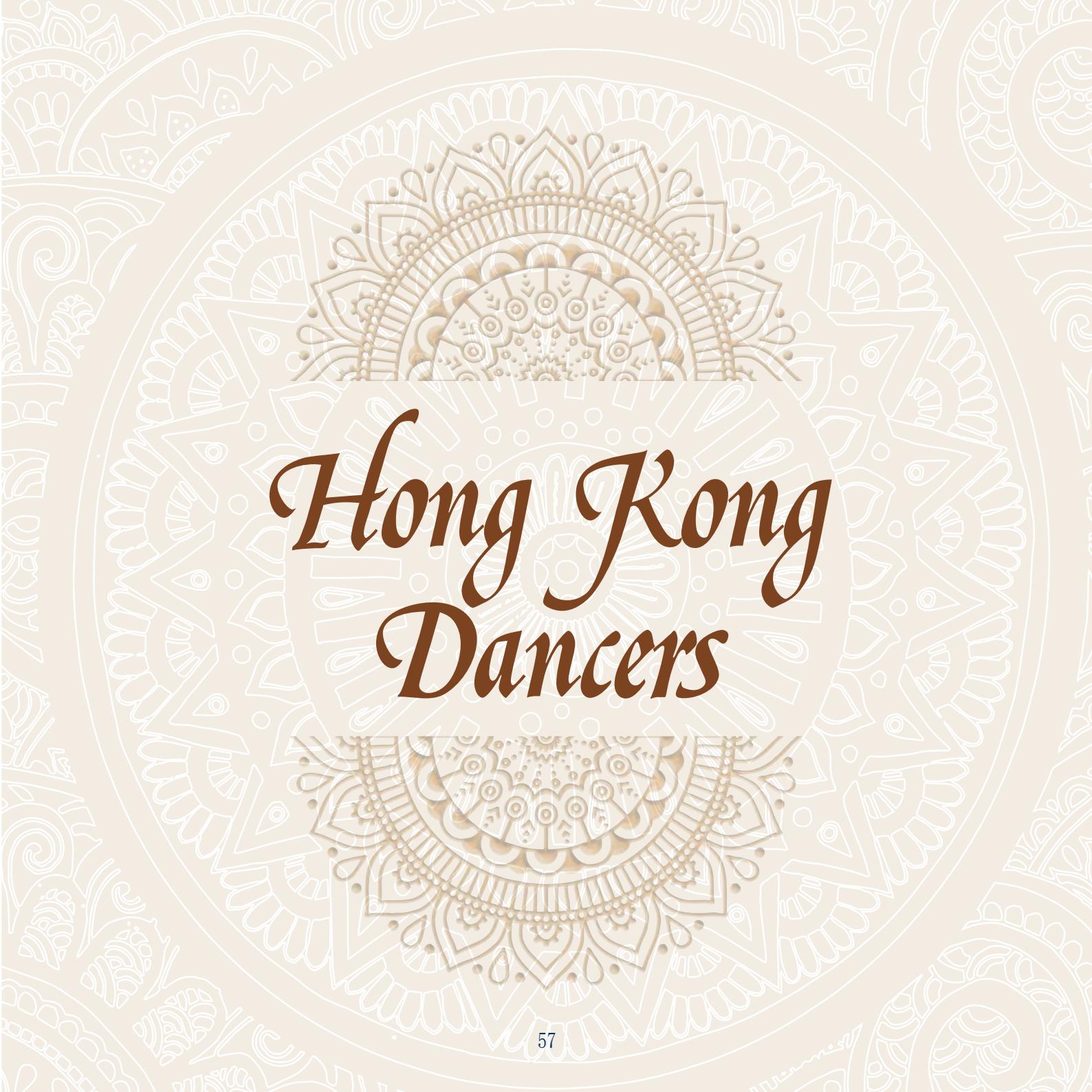
Born in India, Uday Sathala started his dance training at the age of 8, and began his artistic career as an independent artist in 2000 and recognised by the Government of Andhra Pradesh – Department of Culture. Uday was invited to conduct his professional dance training in various countries, including India, Bangkok, Vietnam, Singapore, Fiji, Mainland China and Hong Kong through which he built up his own vision and aspiration in dance.



He established FEEL THE BEAT DANCE STUDIO HK to be a dance entrepreneur in 2011 and co-founded BEYOND Bollywood to be an Artistic Director in 2015 which extended his exploration on the connection between dance and society. Using Hong Kong as a base, Uday has been starting to focus on exploring how the Indian dance vocabulary can apply to people with different levels of disabilities.

In 2018, Uday served as one of the choreographer-directors for his first dance drama production “A Journey Within” premiered in Taipei and re-run in February 2019 at Hong Kong City Hall. He has been participating in the main choreographic work for various overseas cultural exchanges. In July 2019, he was invited to be one of the panels of the judges in the 6th international Bollywood Dance Competition and collaborated with Cosmic Dance as choreographer-performer in Bollywood and Multicultural Dance Festival in Athens, Greece on behalf of BEYOND Bollywood. In the same year, Uday was awarded a recognised dance teaching qualification - Licentiate UKA Dance (Bollywood) by UKA Dance which is a a dance training and examination board based in Blackpool, England.

He specialized in teaching in Kathak, Indian Classical & Semi-Classical, Folk Dance. He helps dance lovers to explore international dance styles through the traditional and modern Indian culture of dance.



Hong Kong Dancers

Krystal Chow (Saraswati) Kathak

Krystal Chow (Saraswati), a Hindu and an Indian dance artist, is the choreographer, dancer, performer, instructor, dance educator & event curator under BEYOND Bollywood.



She is known for her performance in an array of dance forms ranging from Kathak, Semi-classical Indian dance to Bollywood dance and being a Founder of Saffron HK which supports the artistic and cultural development through performing extensively for public and private sector, cultural events hosted by HKSAR and Indian Culture Association of Macau.

With her Hindu background, it broadened and deepened her network of Indian community in Hong Kong and India which also foster her knowledge in Indian culture. This makes her classes become unique through sharing Indian culture with Indian dance.

HONG KONG DANCERS



Jane Chan Kathak

B

ased between London and Hong Kong, Jane is a dance artist trained in Kathak, contemporary dance, Chinese classical, Chinese folk dance and Wing Chun. Jane graduated from University of Surrey with a BA (Hons) in Dance and Culture in 2012 and gained an MA in Dance Cultures in 2013. She performs reg-

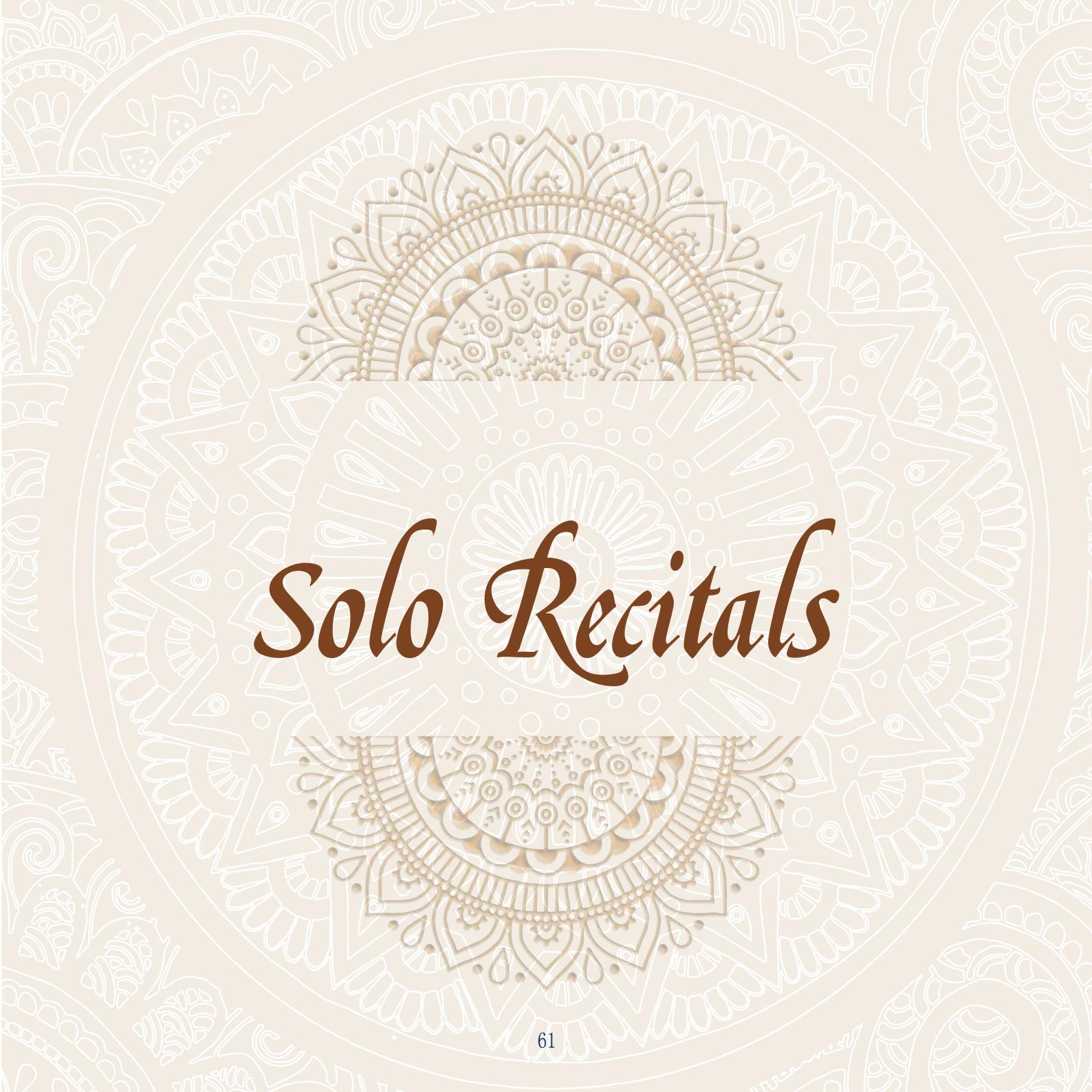


ularly with Amina Khayyam Dance Company (AKDC) since 2014 and tours nationally and internationally. She began her Kathak training in 2008 under Amina Khayyam till today. In 2015, Jane founded Passion Project, her teaching initiative with the belief that the joy of dancing is universal. Having witnessed the power of dance from her late grandmother, Jane also conducts adult community classes with a focus on the elderly and those with dementia.

Jane is also the London Correspondent for dance journal in Hong Kong and a mentor for Arts Emergency, supporting young people who wish to pursue dance as a career. Jane also performs across art forms with musicians, theatre directors, visual artists, photographers and filmmakers. Some of them include: Seetal Kaur, Gigi Giannella, Enrique Vargas Gutierrez (Teatro de los Sentidos), Jihye Kim, Joonhong Min, Roxi Rahmazadeh, Simon Richardson, Moi Tran, Tang Shu-wing, Katja Verheul and Zadie Xa.

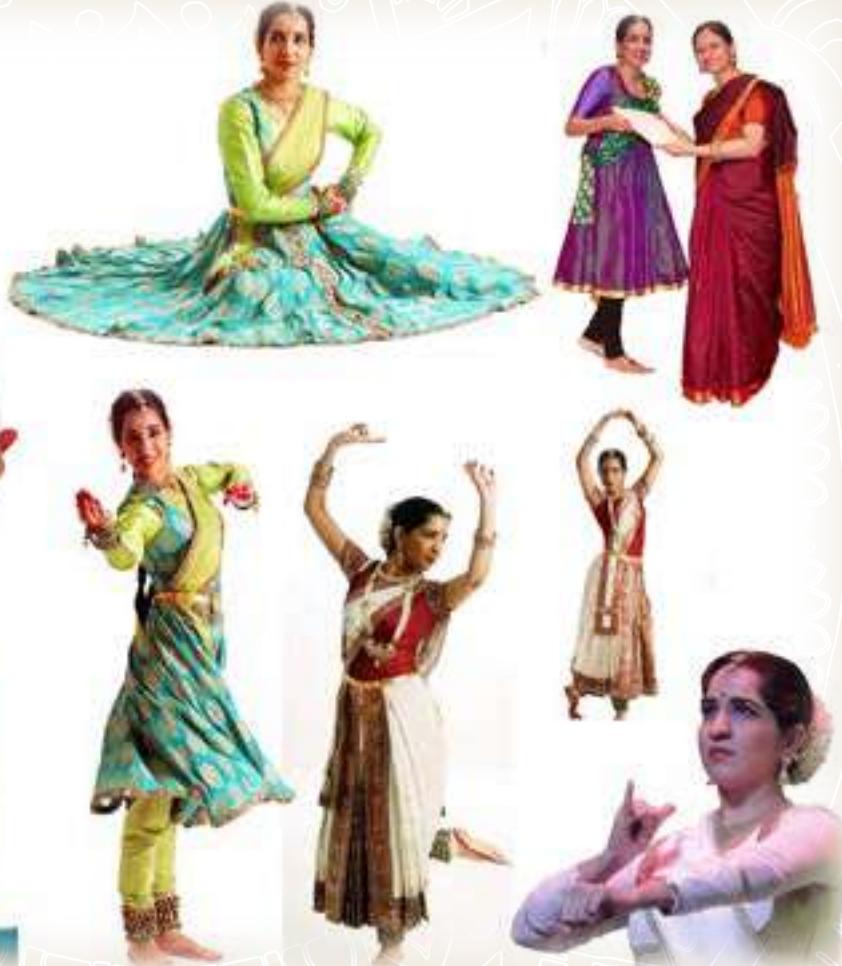
Jane dedicates her body of work to addressing the ever changing and multifaceted Hong Kong-Chinese identity and increasing its representation at home and abroad.

<http://www.chanjane.com/about>



Solo Recitals

Menka Purwaney Amin



29th April 2007, Hong Kong

Anurada Sethuraman



29th April 2007, Hong Kong

Aruna Swamy



29th April 2007, Hong Kong

Performers from India in Hong Kong Newspapers

SAFETY AND COMFORT I located several places I wanted to visit and wanted to make sure my 100-mile drive went as smoothly as possible. I was 20 miles from home, my gas gauge was near empty, and I had no “safe place” to stop. I was worried about the lack of available parking and the possibility of being harassed. There were plenty of places—stores, gas bars, restaurants—and I used parking meters. There were no places to park for free. I ended up where not far from a gas station and a McDonald’s. After this drive, however, I decided I would never let this happen again. My family had been parked in front of McDonald’s, as my mother and I returned home, and the place was packed. We waited and waited to eat, with no service. We had to leave the place, buying a sandwich and a coffee, to get served. I ended up in the car, waiting for my mom to get back. “So-and-so has the same car who apparently frequents this place,” I heard someone say. “I heard about this place,” Visha Shamsi, 21, of Salt Lake City, said. “I heard about this place, and I was [there] last Friday. I would have been there had the time not been held by the traditional dance of [North] India, Kathak, and the [Kathak] dance of [South] India, Bharatanatyam. I did the Bharatanatyam, but at the end I switched to Kathak. Kathak is more intense and used more [body] control and [the] torso.”

REASSURANCE LINES There are three lines of insurance—workmen's compensation, liability, and property. These three protect the business from three types of damage: direct monetary losses due to damage to one of the facilities, liability for damage to others, and damage to property. Workmen's compensation is a state law, but it is more common to agree to insurance than to obtain insurance—most of the losses from damage to property are covered by insurance. Liability insurance policies are very similar to liability insurance policies for individuals. For the insurance, liability insurance must be purchased first—and then the other two types of insurance are purchased. Workmen's compensation is required by law for all employees, 16 to 65 years old. Unemployment insurance is provided by the state government in India, but when a person is laid off, unemployment insurance is not available to cover a gap elsewhere, as he or she continues to live. During the insurance period, the insurance company will make sure that the insurance is valid.

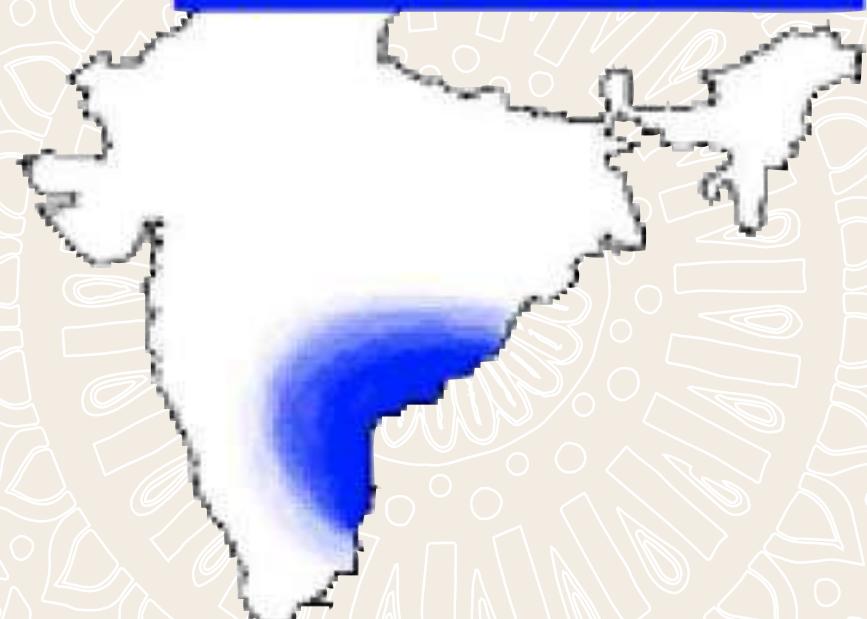


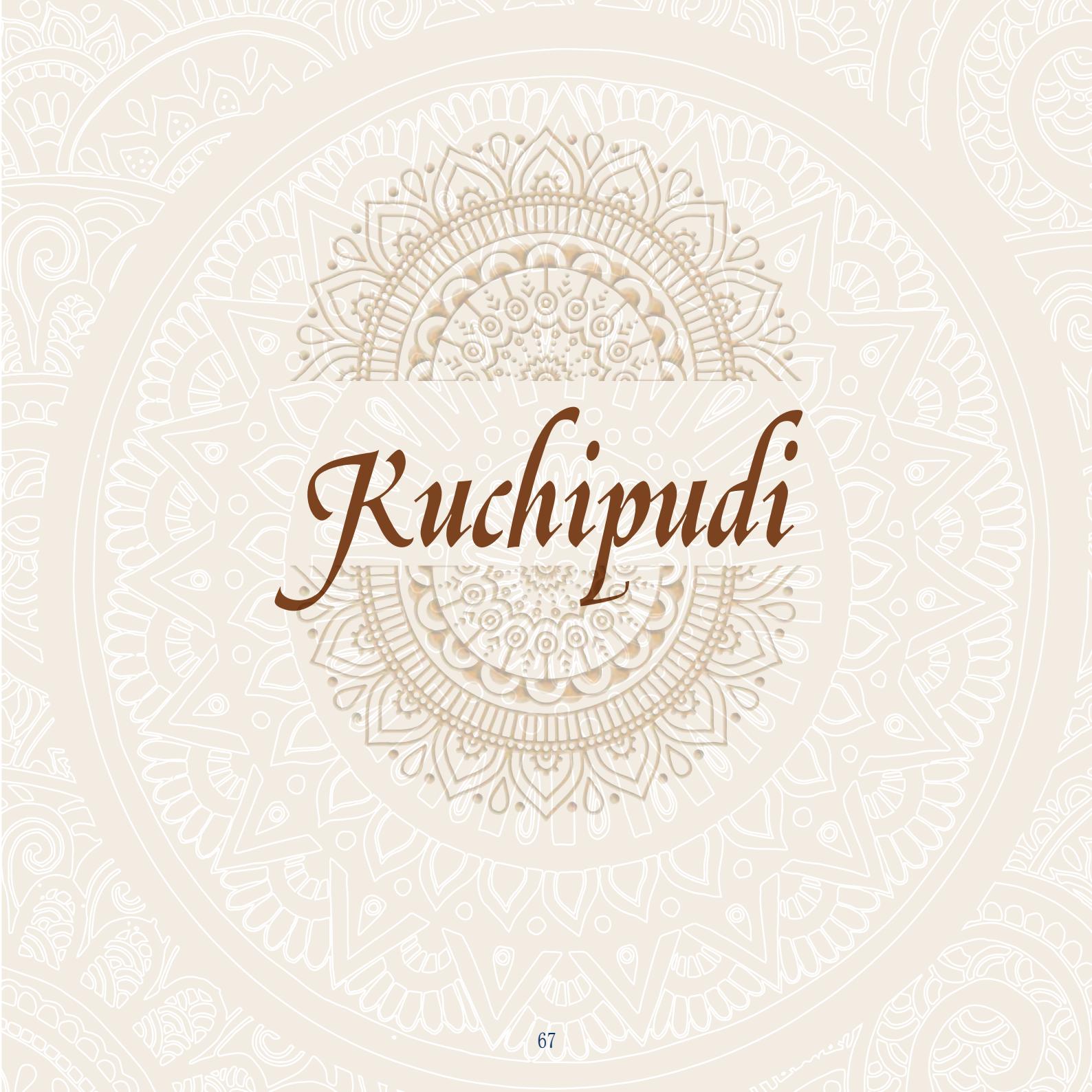
Finally, there is a clear performance advantage when using the new model.

the 1990s were the most dramatic, with the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, and the re-emergence of Russia as a major power, including annexing Crimea, and the resurgence of nationalism. I would say that the most important thing that has happened in the last 20 years is that we have seen an acceleration of the decline of the Soviet Union and the rise of Russia.

Responsible Manufacturing

Kuchipudi's GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION





Ruchipudi

K

uchipudi is one of the leading Indian classical dance forms. It is a dance-drama performance art that originated in a village of Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh, India.

Why is it called Kuchipudi?

Narayanyati penned down a tarangini or a Sanskrit opera called 'Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini'. The composition deals with the life of Lord Krishna from his childhood till his marriage to Rukmini and encompasses 12 Tarangams and includes 302 slokas, 153 songs and 31 choornikaas.

Sidhyendra Yogi followed his guru's footsteps and wrote the play 'Parijatapaharana' also famous as 'Bhama Kalapam'. Facing initial hardships in getting appropriate performers for his play he finally zeroed in on a group of young Brahmin boys of Kuchelapuram and was also granted permission by villagers to execute the play once annually. It is from this village, which is also known as Kuchilapuri, that the dance form derived its name as Kuchipudi. This classical dance is named after a village Kuchelapuram, 65 kms from Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh and became popular due to the patronage of the Brahmins practicing it. The Kuchipudi performer apart from being a dancer and actor has to be skilled in Sanskrit and Telugu languages, music and manuscripts of the performance.

How did Kuchipudi dance art come into existence?

The history of Kuchipudi dance can be traced to 1st century B.C. Vaishnavism that traditionally includes Bhakti music and dance dedicated to Lord Krishna and evolved during the 2nd millennium presumably embraced this art form. The 10th century copper inscriptions validate the existence of Shaivism associated dance drama performance acts called 'Brahmana Melas' or 'Brahma Melas'.

The group spearheaded by the Brahmin Bhagavathulu of Kuchipudi in the year 1502 A.D made this classical dance popular, although women were not allowed to participate in those days. Brahmins performed this art during the medieval era that developed in South India's Tamil region as 'Bhagav-

ata Mela Nataka' and in Andhra region as Kuchipudi.

Tirtha Narayanayati, a composer of Carnatic music and a sanyasin of Advaita Vedanta and his orphan disciple Sidhyendra Yogi, a Telugu Brahmin, are accredited for initiating young Brahmin boys of Kuchipudi village to practice, methodizing and arranging the present day version of Kuchipudi in the 17th century.



What does the dancer wear?

The costumes can either be a sari (wrapped in various ways) or they can be stitched from sari fabric similar to Bharathanatyam. A pair of loose pants, a large pleated length of fabric that attaches to the inseam of the pants – this creates a beautiful fan between the dancer's legs during any half-seated or full-seated postures, a sash going around the waist for male and a blouse, a sash that covers the choli blouse and a Pallu (portion of saree hanging over the shoulder) at the back that is stitched specially for women.

The female dancer is adorned with a lot of jewellery. It includes Rakudi (head ornament), Chandra Vanki (arm band), Adda Bhasa and Kasina Sara (necklace) with nicely plaited hair with flower arrangement. The ornaments are made of light wood called Boorugu.

Male dancer wears loose pants and his body is left bare. Minimal jewellery such as necklace, chandra vanki and waist ornament is worn.

Leg has a pair of anklets with a few lines of bells called Ghungroos. These are specially made



for creating the sound to the rhythm of the footwork and are an arrangement of bells stitched in a cloth or leather tied to the feet. The dancer puts on red dye on the fingertips, circle on palm and nice designs on the feet. This helps in revealing the hand signs and leg movements in an attractive way.

Where does the music come from?

The Kuchipudi dance performance is accompanied by traditional Carnatic Music.

Musical instruments used in Kuchipudi are cymbals, mridangam, violin, thamburi, flute. The Kuchipudi performance is led by a conductor (chief musician) called the Sutradhara or Nattuvanar, who typically keeps the beat using cymbals and also recites the musical syllables; the conductor may also sing out the story or spiritual message being enacted, or this may be a role of a separate vocalist or occasionally the dancer-actors themselves. The Kuchipudi orchestra ensemble includes a drummer (mridangam), kanjira, manjira, surpeti, optionally a clarinetist and a violinist. Depending on the legend being danced out, other musicians such as a flutist may be present.



Mridangam



Manjira



Kanjira



Surpeti

The songs are mostly in languages like Telugu and Sanskrit

How did the dancers use the movements?

Kuchipudi is known for its impressive, quick footwork, dramatic characterization, expressive eye

movements and spirited narrative. It is a blend of tandava and lasya elements. Some items are vigorous and exhilarating dance, punctuated with sculpturesque poses.

A solo recital, which is much popular now, typically consists of items that uniquely combines and balances the three elements of dance – “Nritta” (pure rhythmic dance), “Nritya” (interpretative dance) and “Natya” (dramatic representation). In this, the drama aspect has been reduced. The main expressional numbers are from: Jaidev’s Ashthapadi, the Ramayana, the Puranas and Tyagaraja’s compositions.

The Nritta consists of Theermanams and Jatis encompassing steps and movements in the form of patterns of dance which, though beautiful, have no meaning to convey; the Nritya of Shabdams; and the Natya of acting with Mudras (hand gestures) for the songs.

Usually Kuchipudi is performed for about 2 hours long and is done in specific order.

Invocation The performance starts with a invocation dance. It will be either a Kautuvam or Stuti. Kautuvam are a feature of the performance that is distinctive to Kuchipudi. Stuti are dance songs as a prayer to deities such as Ganesha, Devi, Durga, Shiva, Guru, Kamakshi etc. These are performed either as Nritta or Nritya, to different taalas, wherein the dancer adds acrobatics to the complexity of presentation.

Theermanam is an end note of a nritta piece and is a sequence of abstract dance done to spoken beats, having three repetitions.

Jathiswaram has only pure nritta devoid of abhinaya (acting). This piece opens with the rhythmic mridanga syllables followed by music notations. It is a pure dance presentation with intricate sequences fused with repetitive musical notes.

Shabdam is a Nritya dance item with both nritta and abhinaya. It is an introduction to full fledged expression with direct and simple ideas with few nritta passages in between. Usually the theme of the lyrics will be devotional like Dasavadara, Krishna or Mudaka Shabdam etc. The movements here are leisurely but focus on narrative.

Tarangam is a popular style unique to Kuchipudi that combines artistry with athleticism, the source literature being Narayana Teertha's Sree Krishna Tarangini. This is the form where the dancer places a pot filled with water on his/her head and feet balanced on the rim of a plate and manipulates the brass plate with gestures without spilling a single drop of water. Tarangam remains one of the most popular items from the Kuchipudi repertoire, with its exacting dexterity and acrobatic mastery. This item displays exquisite virtuosity as the dancer executes intricate footwork patterns by dancing on the rim of a brass plate and coordinates them with complicated rhythmic patterns to the accompaniment of carnatic music.

This dance marks the climax of a traditional Kuchipudi recital. It depicts famous stories from Lord Krishna's childhood, and ends in a display of exquisite virtuosity as the dancer executes intricate rhythmic patterns by dancing on the rim of a brass plate.

While fast becoming a solo presentation, Kuchipudi still has strong ties to the dance-drama tradition. It combines the elements of speech, mime and pure dance.

Bhamakalapam (TRIUMPH OF THE WOMAN) The dancer has enormous scope for the dramatisation of characters. The main character is Satyabhama, a beautiful but arrogant queen who goes through the process of discovering the path of true love and devotion. Bhamakalapam is the life and soul of Kuchipudi dance. It is written by Siddhendra Yogi, the founder of the Kuchipudi dance style. A Kuchipudi dancer is considered to have completed training only if he or she successfully presents Bhamakalapam donning the complex but highly interesting role of Satyabhama.

It is a dance drama, with the role of Satyabhama the proud and self-assured queen of Lord Krishna. It depicts the various stages of love. When in separation from Lord Krishna, she recalls the happy days of union and pines for him. At last they are reunited when she sends him a letter.

Other numbers of Kuchipudi are Gollakalapam, Prahlada Charitam, Sashirekha and Parinaya.

Padam or **Javali** is a dance item the dancer's abhinaya is put to test. It narrates expressions of divine love or pangs of separation in love. The tempo is slow and the performance is based on a specific mood of love. This is strategically placed before the final piece, (a thillana or a tarangam), to allow the dancer to recuperate his/her strength and stamina, apart from getting a chance to showcase abhinaya skills.

Thillana is a fast paced dance consisting of complicated and graceful movements and performed at the end of the performance.

In addition to the use of codified hand symbols to tell stories or to create visual patterns in space, Kuchipudi is distinguished by “vachika abhinayam” - where the dancer sings or mouths the words of the songs, creating a seamless performance of sound and movement.

This is a unique dance form as it makes use of four Abhinayas namely, Angika, Vachika, Aharya and Satvica respectively.

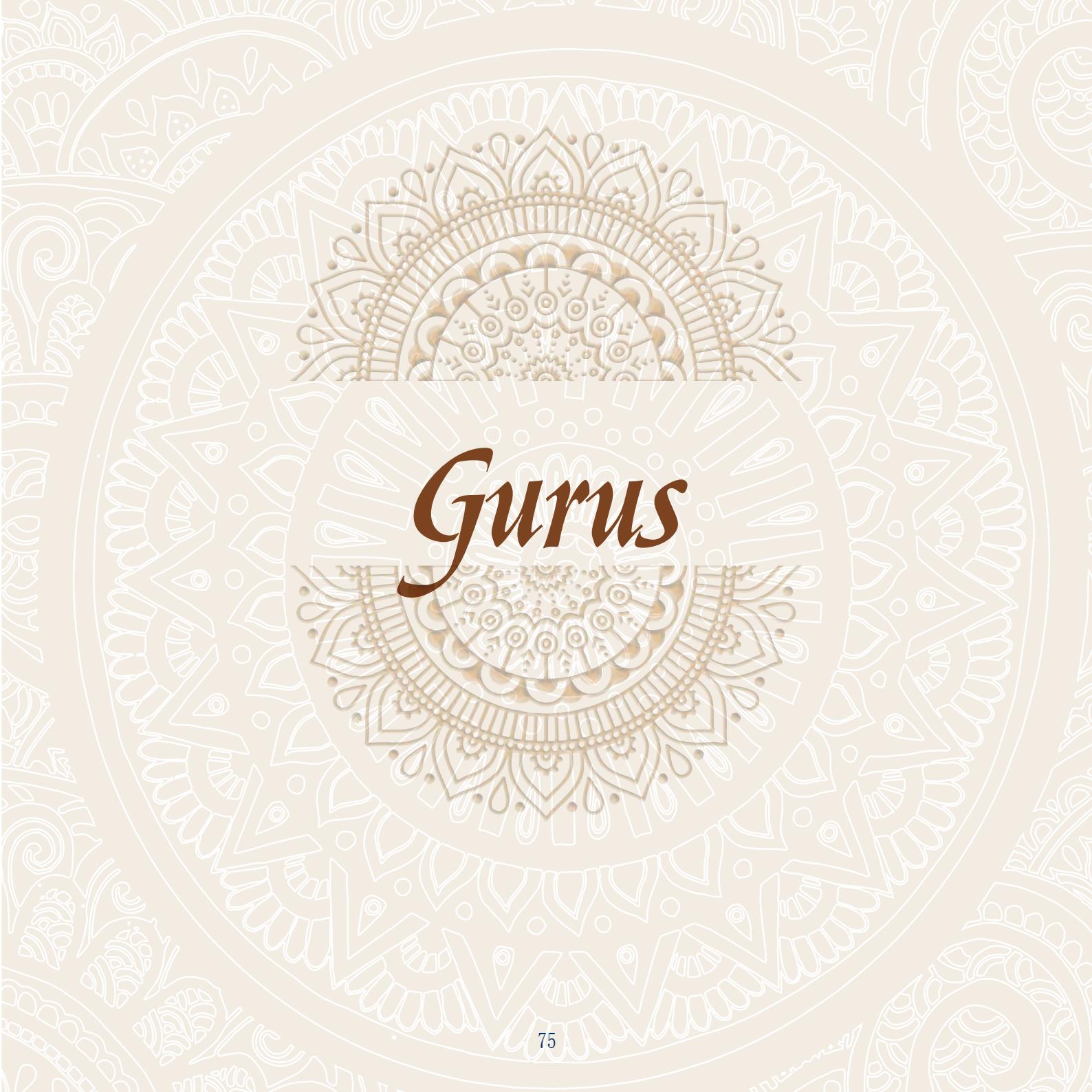
Konugolu is a salient feature in this dance form, especially, we can see it in Shabdams and in Tarangams. When the Natuuvanar (singer) sings Jathi in a rhythmical pattern, the mridangist plays mridangam according to the rhythm while the dancer dances in different patterns. It should be purely based on Manodharma. It shows the talent and creativity of the Nattuvanar, Mridangist and dancer too.

What are the courses offered for this art form?

Today, certificate, diploma, degree and postgraduate courses covering the practice and theory of Kuchipudi as well as the languages associated with its development are available at major universities of India. MPhil and PhD courses are also offered in this field of art.

<https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-dance/classical/kuchipudi.html>

<https://www.utsavpedia.com/cultural-connections/kuchipudi-poetic-moves/>



Gurus

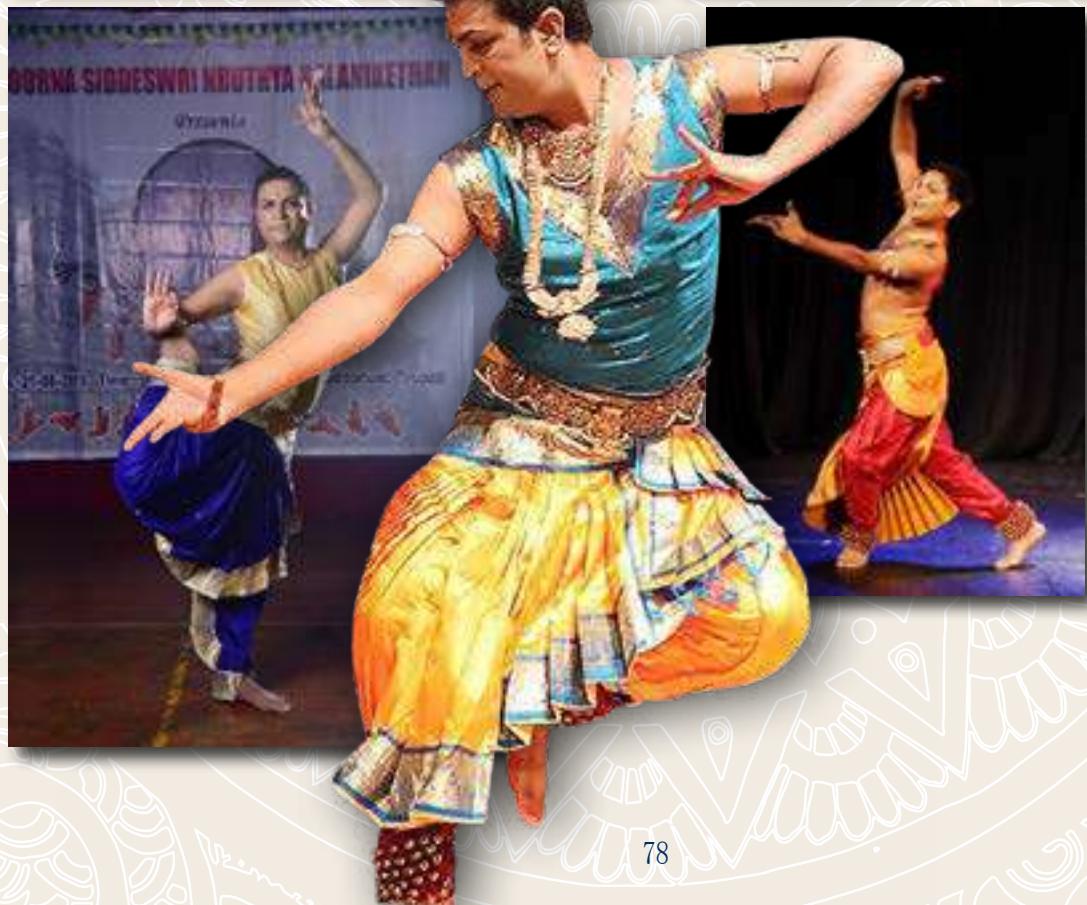
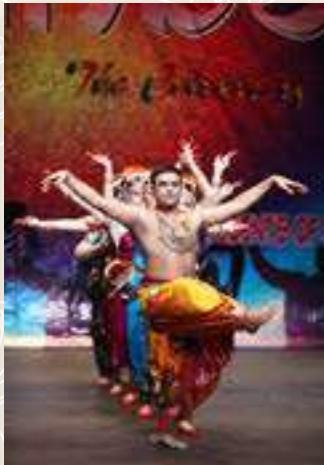


Hari Om Kuchipudi

Hari Om Kuchipudi was born to Professors Late E.Nagamamba and E. S. Murthy belongs to a family of musicians and dancers. Under the skilled guidance of legendary Guru Sri Pasumarthi Sitaramiah, an exponent of Kuchipudi dance, Hari Om started learning Kuchipudi at a very tender age of 3 and started performing by the age of 5. His most prestigious achievements include his participation in the 1994 and 1995 International Kuchipudi Dance Festivals in Mumbai and Hyderabad respectively. He also won a scholarship from The Centre for Cultural Resources and Training in New Delhi to study Kuchipudi for 8 years. Subsequently, he obtained a Diploma in Kuchipudi dance from the Telugu University, Hyderabad in 1995. Hari Om learnt Kuchipudi in various traditions like Pasumarti tradition and Vempaty tradition from the Kuchipudi Kalakshetra, Bharathanatyam, Andhra Natyam and Perini Shiva Tandavam and obtained a certificate in Mridangam from the Telugu University,



Master Hari Om is an established Kuchipudi dance master who has been teaching in Hong Kong since 2003. He is also the trendsetter of Bollywood and semi classical Indian dance classes in Hong Kong.



GURUS



ART SOULS OF INDIA



Duo and Solo Recitals Ruchipudi

Jackie Law 羅綺芬



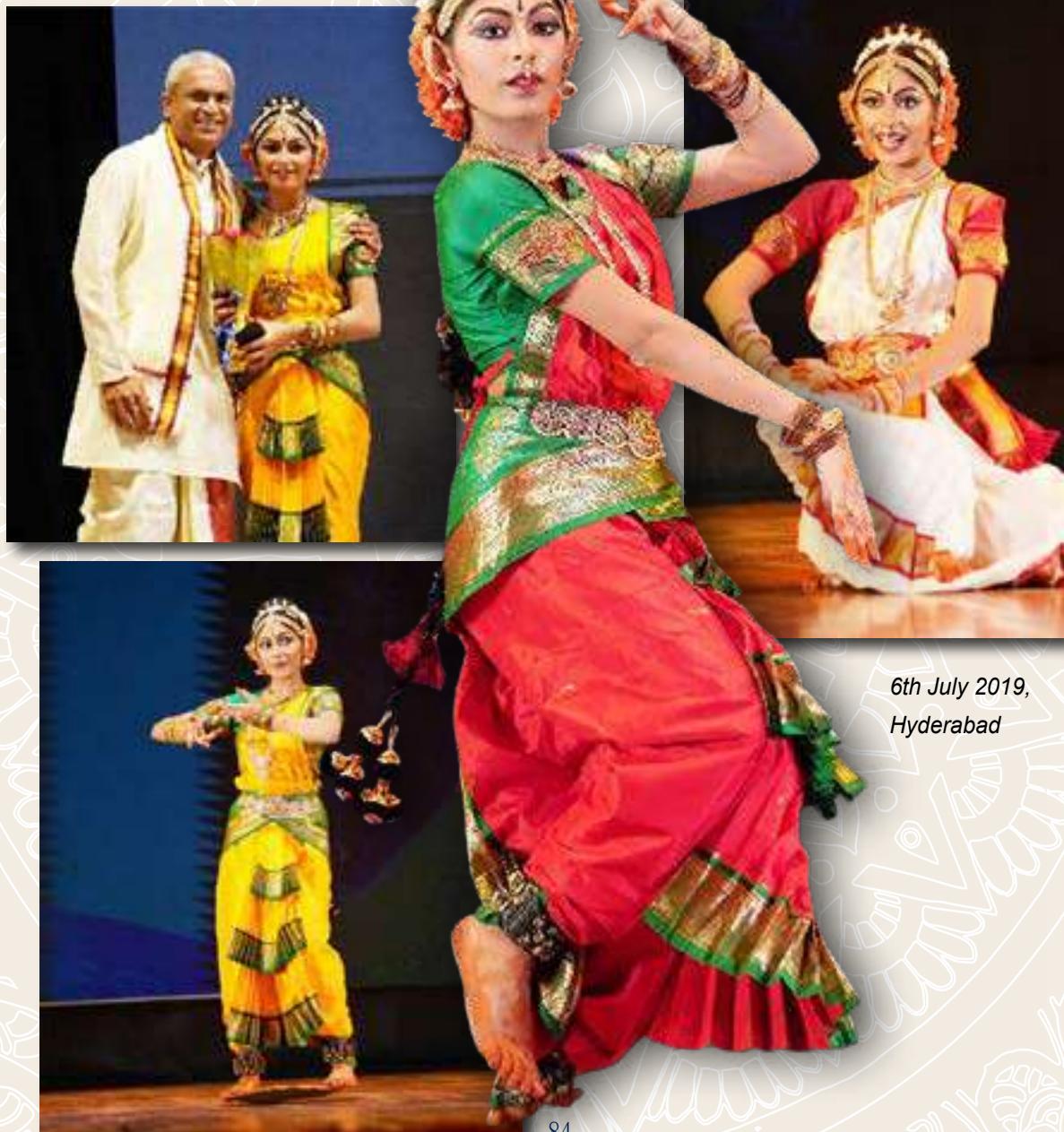
4th Nov 2017, Ananda Nartanam 2017

Cynthia Lau 劉雅雯



4th Nov 2017, Ananda Nartanam 2017

Nikita Attaluri



6th July 2019,
Hyderabad



Other Dancers...

Classical Dance Performers with Indian Spirit



Anita Lee

Learning Kuchipudi since 2003, performed extensively in HK, Macau, China, Singapore and India including The International Kuchipudi Convention and Naadaneerajanam



Virginia Cheung

Learning Kuchipudi since 2003, performed extensively in HK, Macau, China, Singapore, Japan, Taiwan and India including The International Kuchipudi Convention and Naadaneerajanam



Kirby Wong

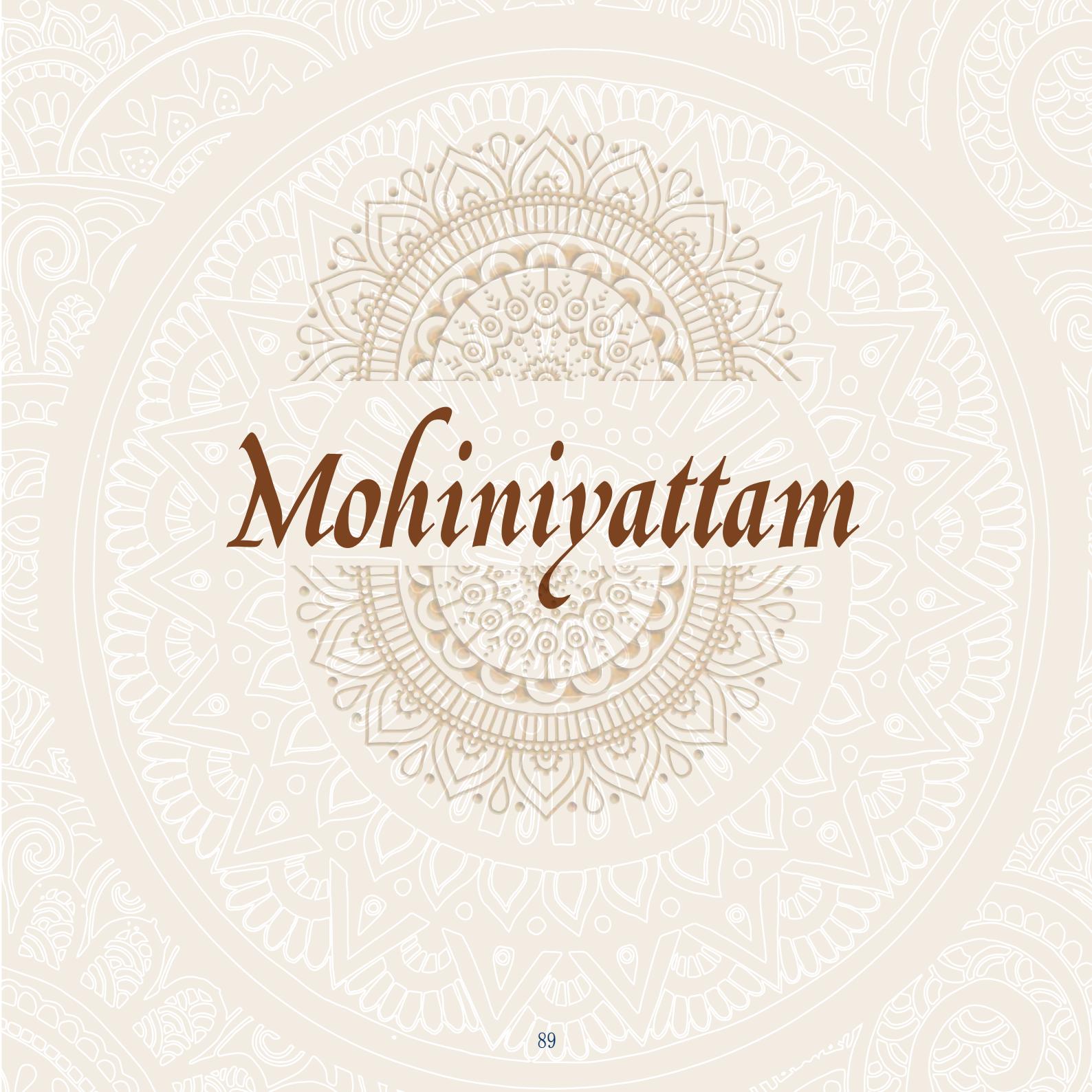
Learning Kuchipudi since 2008, performed extensively in HK, Macau, China, Singapore, Japan, Taiwan and India including The International Kuchipudi Convention and Naadaneerajanam

Roopa Kiran

Rounding Director of Laasya school of dance, Roopa Kiran is Bharathanatyam teacher and performer along side a student learning Kuchipudi in Visakhapatnam from Nataraj music and dance academy under guru Ms. K.V. Lakshmi.



ART SOULS OF INDIA



Mohiniyattam

Mohiniyattam or Mohiniattam is one of the Indian classical dance forms that evolved in the Southern state of Kerala, India, performed solo, exclusively by women.

How did Mohiniyattam come into existence?

The temple dancers of olden days are said to be the first to have started this dance form in commemoration of this great mythological event, and the world was eternally blessed with the captivating classical dance form, Mohiniyattam. The leisurely movements, the swaying yet graceful symphony of the hips and eye movements that enchant all who witness them are all synonymous with this legendary art form. Initially called 'Dasiattam' because of the Devdasis (temple dancers) who first performed it, Mohiniyattam was very popular during the Chera reign from 9th to 12th century.

The Devadasi dance tradition, developed through the temple danseuses, is an important part of India's cultural history. Bharathanatyam in Tamil Nadu, Kuchipudi in Andhra Pradesh, Odissi in Orissa and Mohiniyattam in Kerala took shape in this institution. These dance forms in the long run developed a classical status. It was a common custom in all places that a maiden underwent a symbolic marriage with the deity before she became a Devadasi, the servant of the god. In Kerala, it was called 'Penkettu'. The Manipravala compositions of the 13th century mention the devadasis of Kerala. Famous dancers like Unniyachi, Unniyati, Unnichirutevi and others are described as expert exponents of the Devadasi art, attached to Siva temples residing in their precincts. Most of the stone inscriptions containing references to Devadasis in Kerala have been discovered from Lord Siva temples. The Saiva form of religion has an antiquity of about 4000 years. Dance was an important factor in the worship of Lord Siva, 'Nataraja'.

The first reference to Mohiniyattam is found in 'Vyavaharamala' composed by Mazhamangalam Narayanan Namboodiri, of the 16th century CE.

Why is it called Mohiniyattam?

The term Mohiniyattam comes from the words “Mohini” meaning a woman who enchants onlookers and “aattam” meaning graceful and sensuous body movements. The word “Mohiniyattam” literally means, “dance of the enchantress”.

There are two stories of the Lord Vishnu disguised as a Mohini. In one, Lord Vishnu comes to aid the Gods by assuming the form of the beautiful enchantress Mohini to seduce their arch nemesis, the Asuras (demons). He retrieves the very elixir of life from them, which is said to have appeared when the Ocean of Milk was churned. In the second story Vishnu appears as Mohini to save Lord Shiva from the demon Bhasmasura. The name Mohiniyattam may have been coined after Lord Vishnu, and the main theme of the dance is love and devotion to God, with usually Vishnu or Krishna being the hero.

Originated as the temple dance performed by Devadasis, it portrays feminine love in its myriad forms carnal, devotional and maternal- with an accent more on Lasya and Bhava.

What does the dancer wear?

Its elegant costume, traditional jewellery and alluring make up are synonymous with the culture of Kerala. The costume includes white sari embroidered with bright golden brocade (known as kasavu) as borders.

Once it was performed only in temple premises and royal courts.



Where does the music come from?

The accompaniments for Mohiniyattam are Vocal, Veena, Venu, Maddalam and Idakka. Other instruments are also not unusual.



Maddalam



Flute



Idakka



Veena

The language used in the lyrics is a pleasant mixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit, known as Manipravalam. The vocal music of Mohiniyattam involves variations in rhythmic structure known as cho.

How do the dancers use the movements?

The Mohiniyattam dance is performed to this accompaniment by the subtle gestures and footwork of the danseuse. The performer uses the eyes in a very coy yet sensual manner, the purpose being to enchant the mind without enticing the senses.

In the main items Cholkettu, Padavarnam and Padam, Mudras and facial expressions are more important than the rhythmic steps. Costumes and ornaments of Mohiniyattam have much in common with female characters of Koodiyattam and Kathakali.

The dance follows the classical text of Hastha Lakshanadeepika, which has elaborate descriptions of Mudras (gesture expressions by the hand, palm and fingers).

A solo performance in the traditional form has the following items.

Usually Mohiniyattam is performed for about 2 hours long and is done in specific order.

Cholkettu, an invocation to Siva and Devi.

Jathiswaram, a display of pure dance that synchronizes with swaras, music.

Varnam a harmonious blend of nritta (pure dance) and nritya (abhinaya).

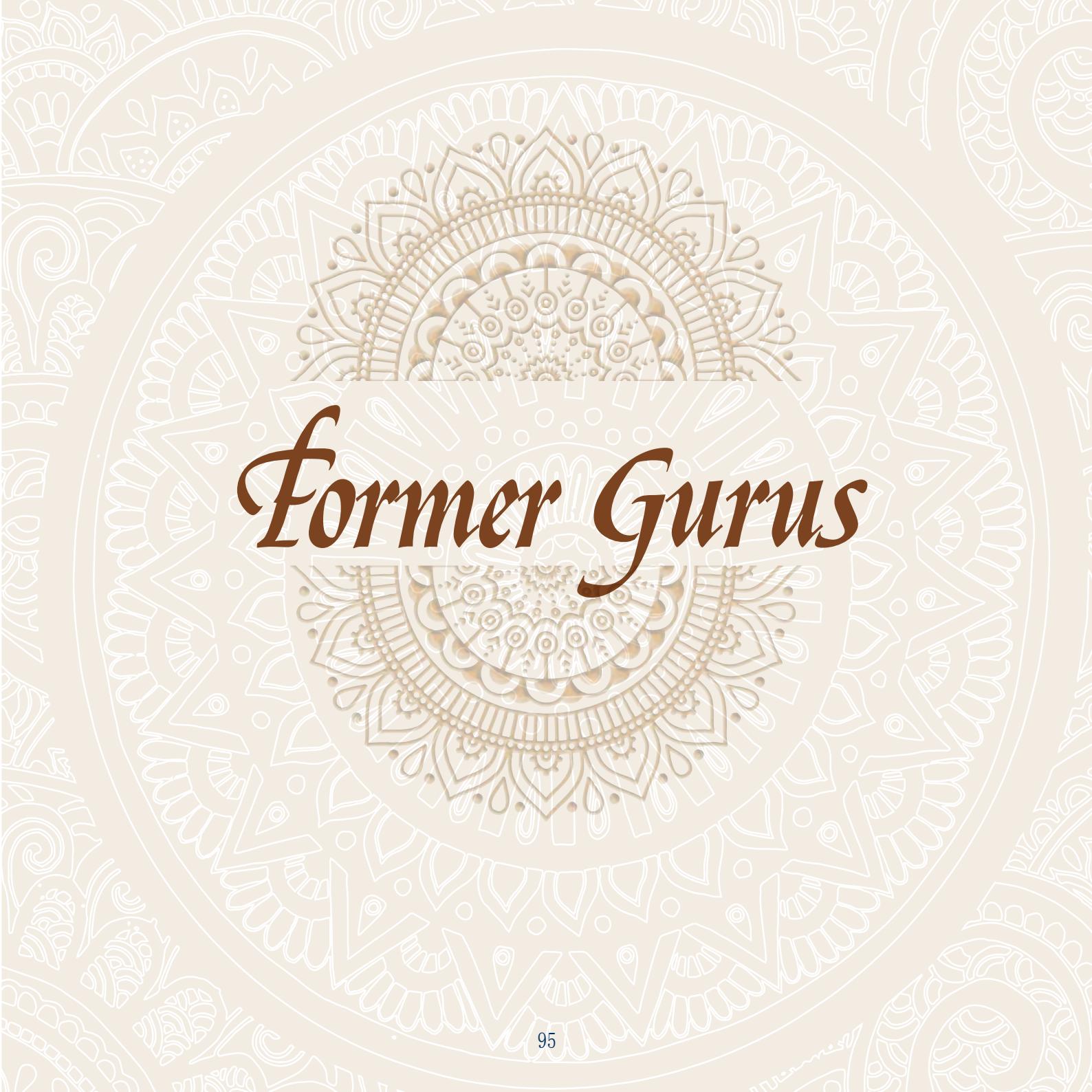
Padam on the other hand highlights facial expressions as the theme evolves. The combination of dance steps and the drama of facial expressions in lasya style is a rare treat to dance lovers. The face of the dancer becomes the arena where the navarasas, nine emotions unique to Indian aesthetics, tell tales.

Thillana is the concluding dance where all the steps and their combinations are re-enacted with the singular dominant expression of the major theme of the dance piece. It is almost similar to the singing of Mangalam in a Carnatic musical concert.

What are the Courses offered for this art form?

Today, certificate, diploma, degree and postgraduate courses covering the practice and theory of Mohiniyattam as well as the languages associated with its development are available at major universities of India. MPhil and PhD courses are also offered in this field of art.

ART SOULS OF INDIA



Former Gurus

Divya Arun

Mohiniyattam, Bharathanatyam

Divya Arun is a seasoned Mohiniyattam and Bharathanatyam performer, choreographer and educator who started learning these dance forms from Smt. Chandrika Kurup (Kalamandalam) of Noopura School of Indian Classical Dances from the age of five. She had advanced training in Mohiniyattam under Guru Padma Sashikumar from Natyalaya. Divya further continued her learning under renowned Mohiniyattam researcher and educator, Smt. Nirmala Paniker (Director, Natana Kaisiki) honing her craft focusing on the nuances of 'Abhinaya'. Divya had the opportunity to perform in various dance festivals in India and Hong Kong. Divya currently residing in Hong Kong is the Founder and Artistic Director of Mudra Dance Academy, Hong Kong; the only Dance Academy in Hong Kong to offer Mohiniyattam dance training to passionate students. The Academy also offers training for other classical Indian contemporary dance pieces.



FORMER GURUS



Dr. Siri Rama

Bharathanatyam & Kuchipudi

Dr Siri Rama was invited to teach Bharathanatyam and Kuchipudi at Vrindaban academy of the renowned flautist Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia. Siri began teaching classical dance under Vrindaban headed by Dr Avisha Gopalakrishnan. Siri Rama lived in Hong Kong from 1992-1999 during which she performed for all three leading Indian cultural organisations in the city, Ganajali, Indian Arts Circle and Vrindaban Academy, and also completed a PhD in Fine Arts at the University of Hong Kong under Indian scholar Prof Rajeshwari Ghose.



She also conducted numerous lecture demonstrations and workshops on Indian dance for a variety of organisations including the Center for the Arts at Hong Kong University for Science and Technology (HKUST), the department of Music at Hong Kong University (HKU), the Friends of the Chinese University Museum, the Hong Kong Academy for the Performing Arts, the Urban and Regional Councils, and the Hong Kong Youth Arts Festival.

She staged three major productions Tulsidas Ramayan and Krishna Leela with the support of Indian Arts society with a cast of over 50 artistes, and she staged Buddha Charita for the University of Hong Kong. Siri was also featured several times in the local Hong Kong media - on radio, television and in the local press. She was also invited to choreograph and conduct dance events for the International Travel Convention, the Hong Kong Kannada Sangha and for the Cantonese-language television station TVB-Jade.

FORMER GURUS



Kavita Gupta Kathak

K

avita believes in Sadguru words. Indian classical dance and music are not just for entertainment they are designed to elevate your consciousness.

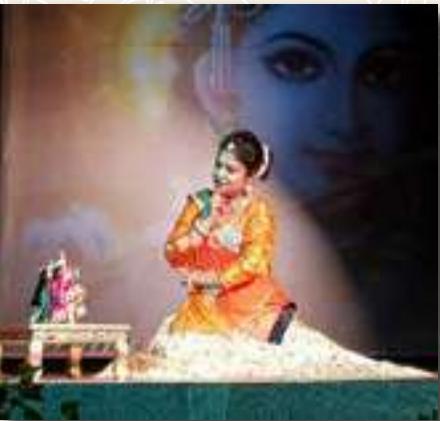
Founder of Nrityanjali. Kavita is a choreographer, teacher and performer. She performed in Hong Kong, London, Holland and India.



She learnt kathak from Guru Abhayshankar Mishra, disciple of Pandit Birju Maharaj, Vashanti Vaishav daughter of Pandit Firtu Maharaj and Mrs. Renuka.

Her journey to become a dancer is more for society and charity. She is trying to spread joy and happiness through her dance.

FORMER GURUS



Shushma Kumari Kathak

Shushma Kumari is a trained Kathak dancer with PRABHAKAR degree in Kathak from reputed institute "Prayag Sangeet Samiti, Prayag Raj." She also holds a SENIOR DIPLOMA in vocals from the reputed institute "Prayag Sangeet Samiti, Prayag Raj." She is an ardent follower of Ma Sarswati. Shushma comes from Jaipur Gharana.



She is a teacher, a performer and choreographer, who has performed in many places in India such as, Shanti Niketan (Kolkata), Banaras Hindu University (Kashi-Banaras) etc. From 1988 to 1993, she has won first prizes in many SOLO as well as group Kathak performances in India.

After shifting to Hong Kong, she has choreographed and guided many students to give astonishing performances in Hong Kong. She continued to give performances by herself and trained, choreographed her students in Hong Kong at many places and in many shows. The group performances by her students in "Asian Ethnic Cultural Performance 2014" have acclaimed large viewers and wide appreciation.

Kathak is her Passion. She keeps on exploring new ways to create interest in young school children. She gets immense pleasure when she finds children are learning with interest. She believes in teaching dance to young children as low as 5 years of age to infuse the interest of dance so that they can pursue it as a hobby and profession in their career later and be proud of rich culture and tradition. She believes in spreading great Indian Kathak dance to common masses. She believes in giving back to society what she has learnt from her Gurus, spreading the culture ahead.

FORMER GURUS



Rajendra R.Nyathi

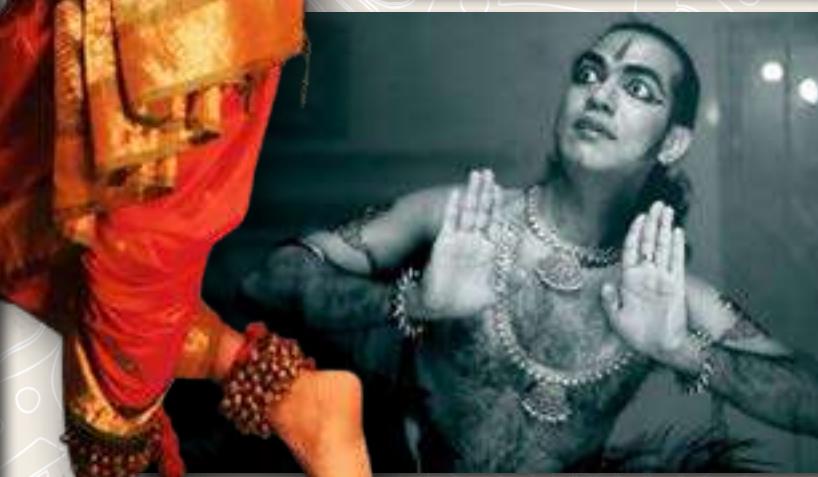
Kuchipudi, Bharathanatyam

Classical dancer Master Rajendra R.Nyathi is another popular teacher in Hong Kong. He is an internationally acclaimed Artist of Bharathanatyam and Kuchipudi and Bollywood dances as well. He holds a first class Master degree in Performing Arts and is a recipient of JRF and the National Scholarships for outstanding young artists by the Government of India. He has served as Head of Department of Dance in some well established Universities in India. He has travelled extensively in Europe, UK, USA, Middle East, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, China and many Asian Countries.



Master Rajendra has set up "Natya Yoga" a cultural organisation which is engaged with a desire to serve and propagate Indian Classical and other art forms to the world. His students perform Classical, semi-classical, and other dance forms choreographed solely by him in various events and festivals. He has been a marvelous trendsetter for all dancers and also sets an excellent example of International Cultural Exchange.

FORMER GURUS



Priyadarshini Ghosh

Mohiniyattam, Bharathanatyam

Priyadarshini Ghosh is an accomplished Indian classical and contemporary dancer, choreographer, and a dance scholar. She is one of the founder members of Sri Shakti Academy, Hong Kong.



She holds an M.A. in Dance from Kalidas Sanskrit University and has completed a Senior Fellowship on Dance as Yoga under the Ministry of Culture, India. She has received the Nehru Fulbright Fellowship 2015-16, teaching at the Brown University, Theatre Arts and Performance Studies as a visiting faculty. Initiated into dance at the Children's Little Theatre, her early training in classical dances was in Kerala Natanam in CLT and both Bharatha Natyam and Mohiniyattam under the tutelage of Smt. Thankamani Kutty of Kalamandalam, Kolkata. It is in the style of Mohiniyattam that she found her reckoning and honed her art under its doyen, Kalamandalam Kalyani Kutty Amma in Kerala. Priyadarshini is a disciple of the legendary Guru Padmabhushan Smt. Kalanidhi Narayanan, with intensive training in Abhinaya and has additional training in Seraikella Chhau with Sri Sashadhar Acharya. She is also a certified Yoga Instructor.

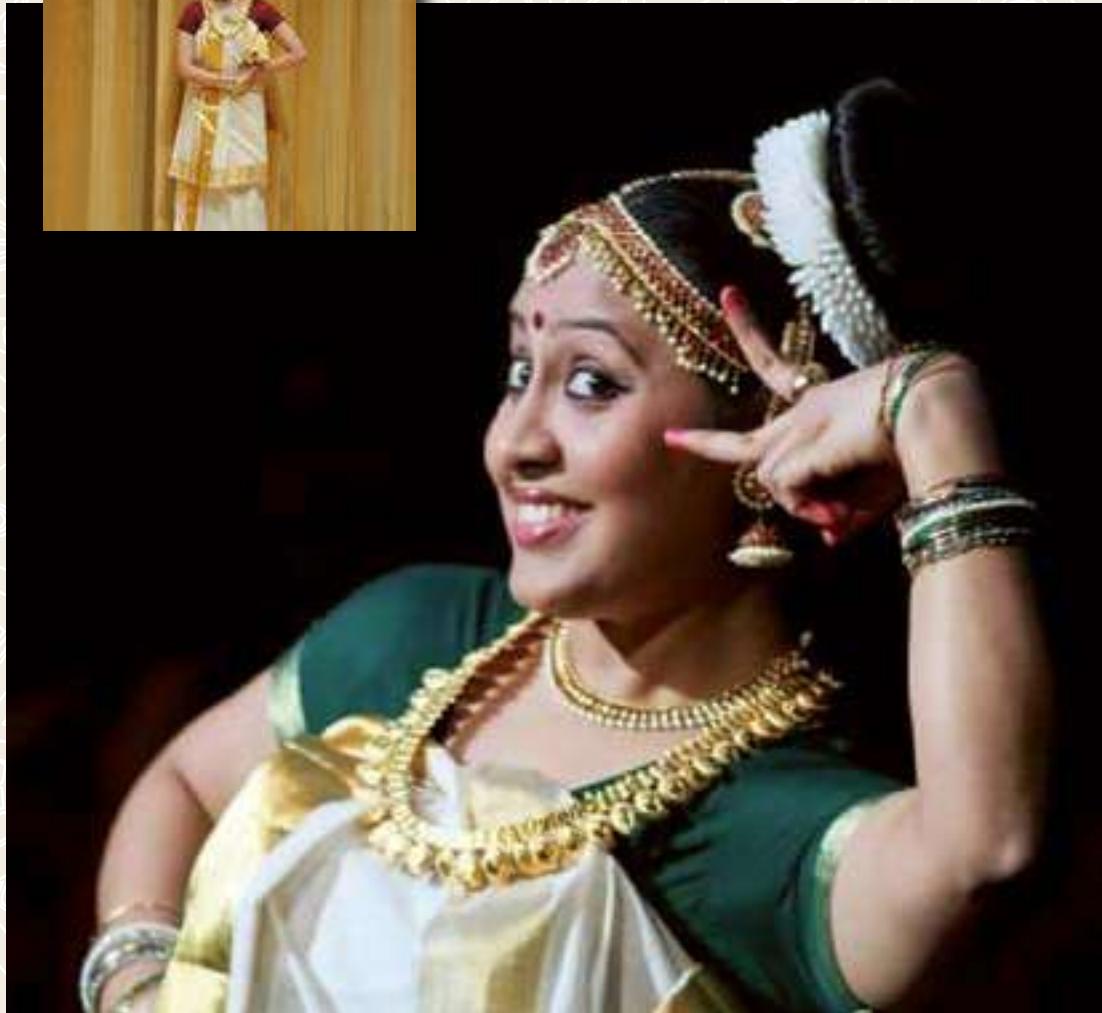
Empanelled artist of ICCR, SNA and Min of Culture, she is an A grade television artist. Awarded with the Srinagar Mani, Priyadarshini has also been International Choreographer in Residence at the American Dance Festival at Duke University.

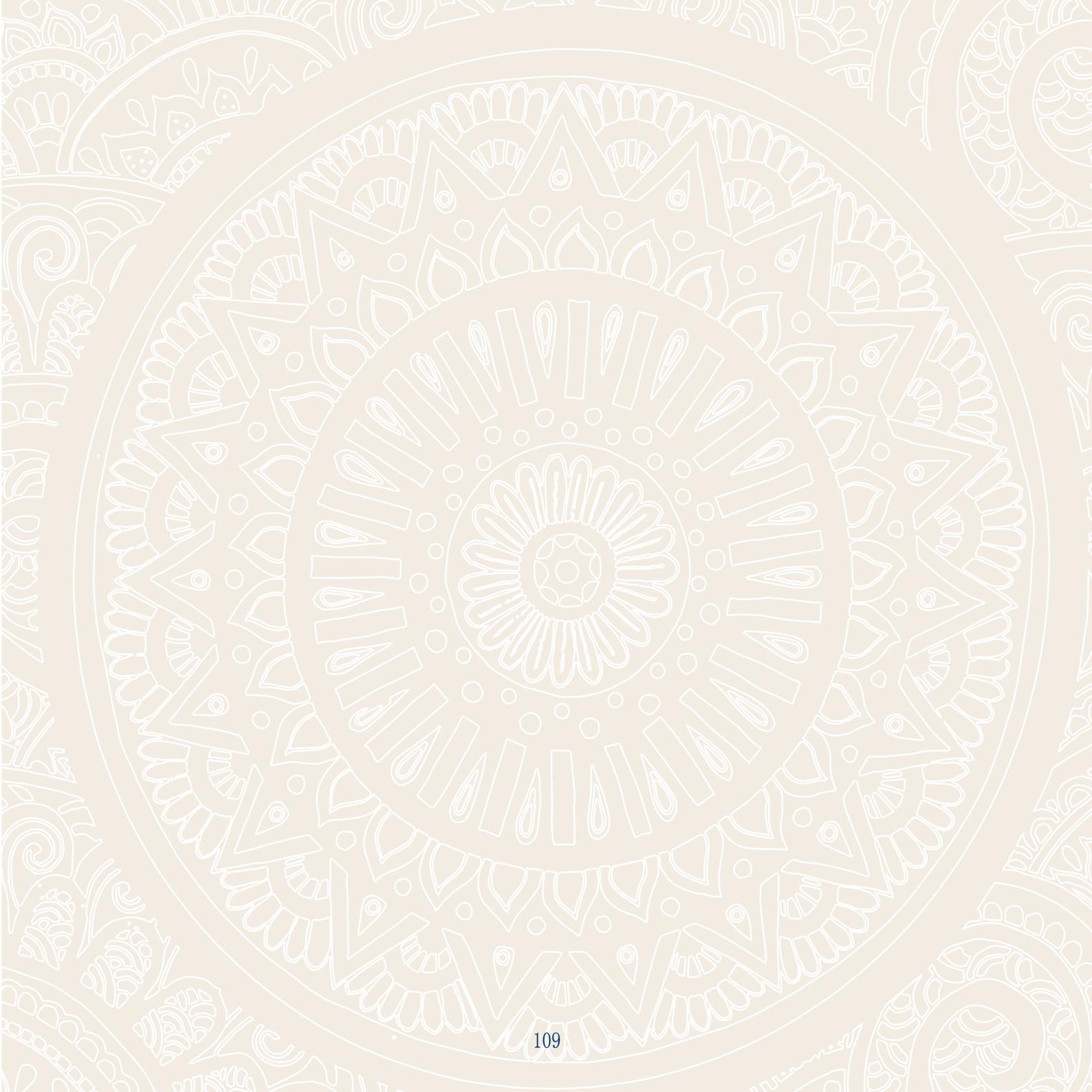
She has choreographed for the National University of Singapore Dance Ensemble; and been a part time and guest teacher at The Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts and Lasalle Sia College for Performing Arts, Singapore – Dance and Drama departments. Her work has been presented as lectures, seminars, workshops, and in journals around the world.

FORMER GURUS



Dhanya Mohiniyattam





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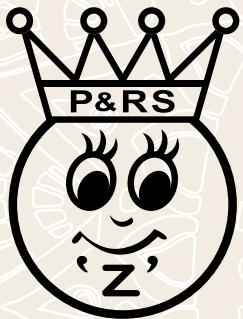
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